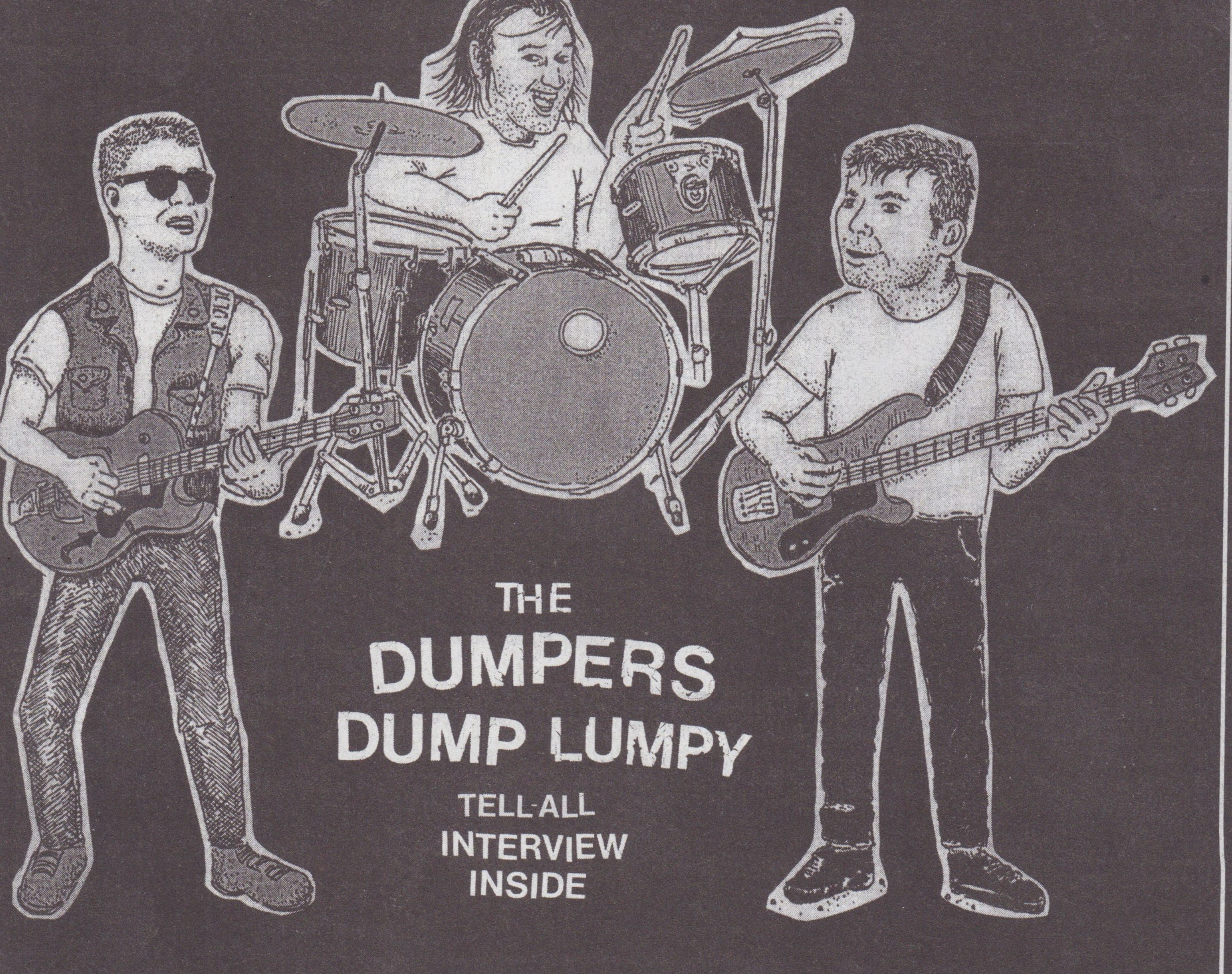
MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

JUNE 2016 NO. 397 $4.99



THE DUMPERS DUMP LUMPY

TELL-ALL INTERVIEW INSIDE

PLUS CONCEALED BLADE UROCHROMES DOKUGA VISITORS LIME CRUSH TINY KNIVES NEWTOWN NEUROTICS FRENOPATICSS KITTEN FOREVER HATTIESBURG, MISSISSIPPI SCENE REPORT

MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

TOP 10

For what it's worth, here're some of the MRR reviewers' current Top 10 (or so) things we've reviewed this month.

GRACE AMBROSE

- REPTOIDES – EP
- COUNTER INTUITS – Monosyllabilly LP
- ANGRY ANGLES – LP / THE LANDLORDS – LP
- SIN MOTIVO – El Desierto LP
- NOVAK – Dumb Records: 1977–1979 LP
- OBJECTS – demo CS
- THE FALL – both 45s / METAL URBAIN – "Panik" 45
- COKSKAR – EP / CRAZY SPIRIT – Whisper EP
- THE WORLD – Managerial Material EP
- RETRETES – Aguantando Como Pueda EP

MATT BADENHOP

- SHEER MAG – III EP
- MUSTANG – "Poison/Mustang"
- LAS VENAS – Náuseas EP
- RETRETES – Aguantando Como Pueda EP
- CRAZY SPIRIT – Whisper EP
- ANARQUIA VERTICAL – Guerra Higiénica EP
- THE LANDLORDS – Fitzgerald's Paris LP
- ALICJA-POP – Rats (Home Recordings 2009–2013) LP
- PELUQUERIA CANINA – Jovenes Promesas LP
- LA VASE – demo CS

WILL BLOMQUIST

- PELUQUERIA CANINA – Jovenes Promesas LP
- THE WORLD – Managerial Material EP
- SUICIDE – both 45s
- THE FALL – both 45s
- DEATH CHURCH – Black Book flexi
- SIN MOTIVO – El Desierto LP
- LAS VENAS – Náuseas EP
- NUEVA FUERZA – EP / GOMS – Ball & Chain EP
- SAD LOVERS AND GIANTS – live
- JÆNG – live

MITCH CARDWELL

- COUNTER INTUITS – Monosyllabilly LP
- THE WORLD – Managerial Material EP
- THE HUNCHES – LP
- ANDY HUMAN AND THE REPTOIDS – Sarcastic EP
- FOSTER CARE – Sterilization LP
- THE RAYDIOS – "Craps/Teacher's Pet"
- ANGRY ANGLES – LP
- NOVAK – Dumb Records: 1977–1979 LP
- PELUQUERIA CANINA – Jovenes Promesas LP
- THE FALL – both 45s / SUICIDE – both 45s

ROBERT COLLINS

- CIBORGUE – demo CS
- VICTIMS – Sirens LP
- KOVAA RASVAA – Pimeä Laskeutuu EP
- CUNTROACHES – demo CS
- SIN MOTIVO – El Desierto LP
- INDIGNATION – live
- DEATH SIDE – live
- SISTER MUNCH – live
- BLOOD PRESSURE – live
- NORTHLESS / PRIMITIVE MAN – split LP

LAYLA GIBBON

- ANGRY ANGLES – LP
- REPTOIDES – EP / THE WORLD – EP
- COUNTER INTUITS – Monosyllabilly LP
- THE FALL – both 45s / SUICIDE – both 45s
- PELUQUERIA CANINA – Jovenes Promesas LP
- NASA SPACE UNIVERSE – 70 AD 12"
- LAS VENAS – Náuseas EP
- SHEER MAG – III EP / CRAZY SPIRIT – Whisper EP
- ALICJA-POP – Rats (Home Recordings 2009–2013) LP
- KITTEN FOREVER – 7 Hearts LP

DAN GOETZ

- DEATH SIDE – live / SYSTEMATIC DEATH – live
- TRIAGE – live
- LYSOL – live
- DAME – live
- OUTSKIRTS – demo and live
- NEGATIVE SCANNER – live
- CCTV – live
- TØRSÖ – live
- JJ DOLL – demo and live
- RADIATION RISKS – demo and live

GREG HARVESTER

- RETRETES – Aguantando Como Pueda EP
- ANGRY ANGLES – LP
- DIVERS – "Achin' On/Can't Do That"
- ANDY HUMAN AND THE REPTOIDS – Sarcastic EP
- COUNTER INTUITS – Monosyllabilly LP
- PELUQUERIA CANINA – Jovenes Promesas LP
- COKSKAR – Sooner Than You Think EP
- HOUSTON AND THE PROBLEMS – demo CS
- FUCKING – Intimacy Issues EP
- SONGS FOR MOMS – live / NEGATIVE SCANNER – live

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TOP 10

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Outta sight, outta mind...

CAROLYN KEDDY

- METAL URBAIN – "Panik/Lady Coca Cola"
- JONI EKMAN – LP
- ANDY HUMAN – EP / THE WORLD – EP
- LA FE – Ruido, Distorsión y Rock EP
- REPTOIDES – EP
- THE TOXICS – 10" EP
- LAS VENAS – EP / PELUQUERIA CANINA – LP
- THE LANDLORDS – Fitzgerald's Paris LP
- ANGRY ANGLES – LP / THE HUNCHES – LP
- ALICJA-POP – Rats (Home Recordings 2009–2013) LP

RAY LUJAN

- DIVERS – "Achin' On/Can't Do That"
- EXECUTORS – All Against All LP
- THE GUILLOTINES / THE PAGANS – split EP
- I HAVE NO MOUTH AND I MUST SCREAM – LP
- THE LIPPIES – CD
- MEAN JEANS – Nite Vision EP
- MRS. MAGICIAN – "Eyes Over Town" 45
- NOVAK – Dumb Records: 1977–1979 LP
- SHEER MAG – III EP /THE WORLD – EP
- SAVAGE REPUBLIC – live

ROTTEN RON READY

- CRAZY SPIRIT – Whisper EP
- LA FE – Ruido, Distorsión y Rock EP
- REPTOIDES – EP
- LIFE FUCKER – Nightmare EP
- ERRADICT! / SUSS LAW – split flexi
- RETRETES – Aguantando Como Pueda EP
- BLIND DEAD – Blinded EP
- GOMS – Ball & Chain EP
- FOSTER CARE – Sterilization EP
- RIP Merle Haggard

FRED SCHRUNK

- THE WORLD – Managerial Material EP
- LAS VENAS – Náuseas EP
- SHEER MAG – III EP
- CRAZY SPIRIT – Whisper EP
- SPLIT VEINS – 12"
- RETRETES – Aguantando Como Pueda EP
- SIN MOTIVO – El Desierto LP
- WITCHES WITH DICKS – Not Just A Passing Season 12"
- PMS 84 – live
- FRANKY - live

LENA TAHMASSIAN

- JONI EKMAN – LP
- KOVAA RASVAA – Pimeä Laskeutuu EP
- NUEVA FUERZA – Nueva Fuerza EP
- PELUQUERIA CANINA – Jovenes Promesas LP
- LA FE – Ruido, Distorsión Y Rock EP
- SHEER MAG – III EP
- ANDY HUMAN AND THE REPTOIDS – Sarcastic EP
- I HAVE NO MOUTH AND I MUST SCREAM – LP
- RETRETES – Aguantando Como Pueda EP
- ANDY PLACE AND THE COOLHEADS – EP

ELI WALD

- COUNTER INTUITS – Monosyllabilly LP
- THE FALL – both 45s
- METAL URBAIN – "Panik/Lady Coca Cola"
- SIN MOTIVO – El Desierto LP
- RETRETES – Aguantando Como Pueda EP
- THE WORLD – Managerial Material-EP
- ANGRY ANGLES – LP
- ANDY HUMAN AND THE REPTOIDS – Sarcastic EP
- NEGATIVE SCANNER – live
- REPTOIDES – EP

BRENDAN WELLS

- FUCKING – Intimacy Issues EP
- NOVAK – Dumb Records: 1977–1979 LP
- ANGRY ANGLES – LP
- THE WORLD – Managerial Material EP
- OBJECTS – demo
- ALICJA-POP – Rats (Home Recordings 2009–2013) LP
- COKSKAR – Sooner Than You Think EP
- GOMS – Ball & Chain EP
- SIN MOTIVO – El Desierto LP
- NEGATIVE SCANNER – live

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CONTRIBUTORS

Drew Ailes
Cam Bonelli
Arielle Burgdorf
Brandon Freels
Sarah Krock
Jesse Locke
Hampton Martin
Tony Mottram
Rui Oliveira
Liz Pelly
James Rexroad
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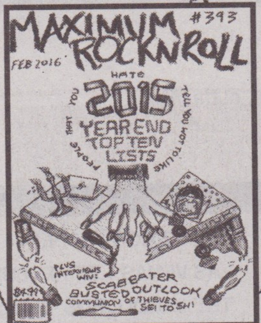
RECENT BACK ISSUES: MRR's Latest and Greatest

Maximum Rocknroll
MERCENÁRIAS – SBSM
OBNOX – NOT DEAD YET
EMASCULATOR – STRANGLED
POPULATION – PARASITES
DO YA HEAR WE?

MRR #390/Nov '15

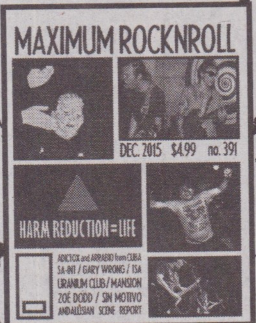
AS MERCENÁRIAS from Brazil, Toronto's Not Dead Yet festival, OBNOX out of Ohio, SBSM from Oakland, Edmonton's STRANGLED, Chicago's own POPULATION, PDX rockers EMASCULATOR, Chatanooga's Do Ya Hear We? fest, NJ/Bay Area pop-punkers PARASITES, plus photos from the opening of DIY Space for London and Springfield, IL's Dumb Fest 3D.



MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL
#393
FEB 2016
2015
YEAR END
TOP TEN
LISTS
PLUS INTERVIEWS WITH:
SCAB EATER
BUSTED OUTLOOK
COMMUNION OF THIEVES
SEI TO SHI

MRR #393/Feb '16

2015 Year-End Top Tens, the Bay Area's BUSTED OUTLOOK, SCAB EATER from Australia, NYC/Japan's SEI TO SHI, COMMUNION OF THIEVES from El Paso, and a Cacophonie Nights photo spread.



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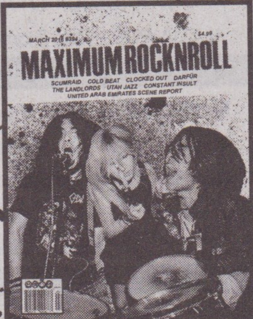
DEC. 2015 $4.99 no. 391
HARM REDUCTION = LIFE
ADICTOX and ARRABIO from CUBA
SA-INT / GARY WRONG / TSA
URANIUM CLUB / MANSION
ZOË DODD / SIN MOTIVO
ANDALUSIAN SCENE REPORT

MRR #391/Dec '15

The MINNEAPOLIS URANIUM CLUB BAND, GARY WRONG from Alabama, Fort Worth's SIN MOTIVO, SA-INT from Finland, Oakland's MANSION, our first-ever Cuban band interview with ARRABIO and ADICTOX, San Francisco's TSA, an interview with activist Zoë Dodd, photo spreads from All Punks Go For It and Not Dead Yet 2015, and an Andalusia scene report.



MAXIMUMROCKNROLL
SCUMRAID COLD BEAT CLOCKED OUT DARFÜR
THE LANDLORDS UTAH JAZZ CONSTANT INSULT
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES SCENE REPORT

MRR #394/Mar '16

SCUMRAID from Korea; San Francisco's COLD BEAT; Glaswegian hardcore from CLOCKED OUT; the LANDLORDS from Charlottesville, VA; Minneapolis's CONSTANT INSULT; Helsinki's DARFÜR; UTAH JAZZ from Buffalo; UAE scene report; This Is Austin, Not That Great photo spread; Ralph Rivera's first column, Brendan Wells's first issue as coordinator

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL
JANUARY 2016 / #392 / $4.99
BLANK SPELL
G.L.O.S.S. TOUR DIARY
SALINAS RECORDS
VOLUNTEERS | ANDY HUMAN
BEIRUT'S TEX FOX
ROOM 101, ONE MAN BAND
R.I.P. S.H.I.B.G.B.'s
STATIC SHOCK WEEKEND
COLLECTIVE DELUSION / MASS HYSTERIA

MRR #392/Jan '16

BLANK SPELL from Philadelphia, Oakland's ANDY HUMAN, G.L.O.S.S. tour diary, East Anglian hardcore from VOLUNTEERS, S.H.I.B.G.B.'s retrospective, Detroit's Salinas Records, Beirut's TEX FOX, one-man band from New Orleans ROOM 101, photo spreads from Static Shock Weekend and Austin's Collective Delusion/Mass Hysteria exhibition, Still Not Quiet on the Western Front fest announcement.

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THE PESSIMISTS
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APRIL 2016
FEST MANIA
EVERYTHING IS NOT OK
MANIC RELAPSE
DAMAGED CITY

MRR #395/Apr '16

Fest Mania special edition: Oakland's Manic Relapse, Washington's Damaged City, and Oklahoma City's Everything Is Not OK. Also: NEGATIVE SCANNER from Chicago, Brazil's the PESSIMISTS, SOUL GLO from Philadelphia, Temecula hardcore from the COLTRANES, Bogotá Punk documentary series, HeartFirst Records interview, and a photo spread by Martin Sorrondeguy.

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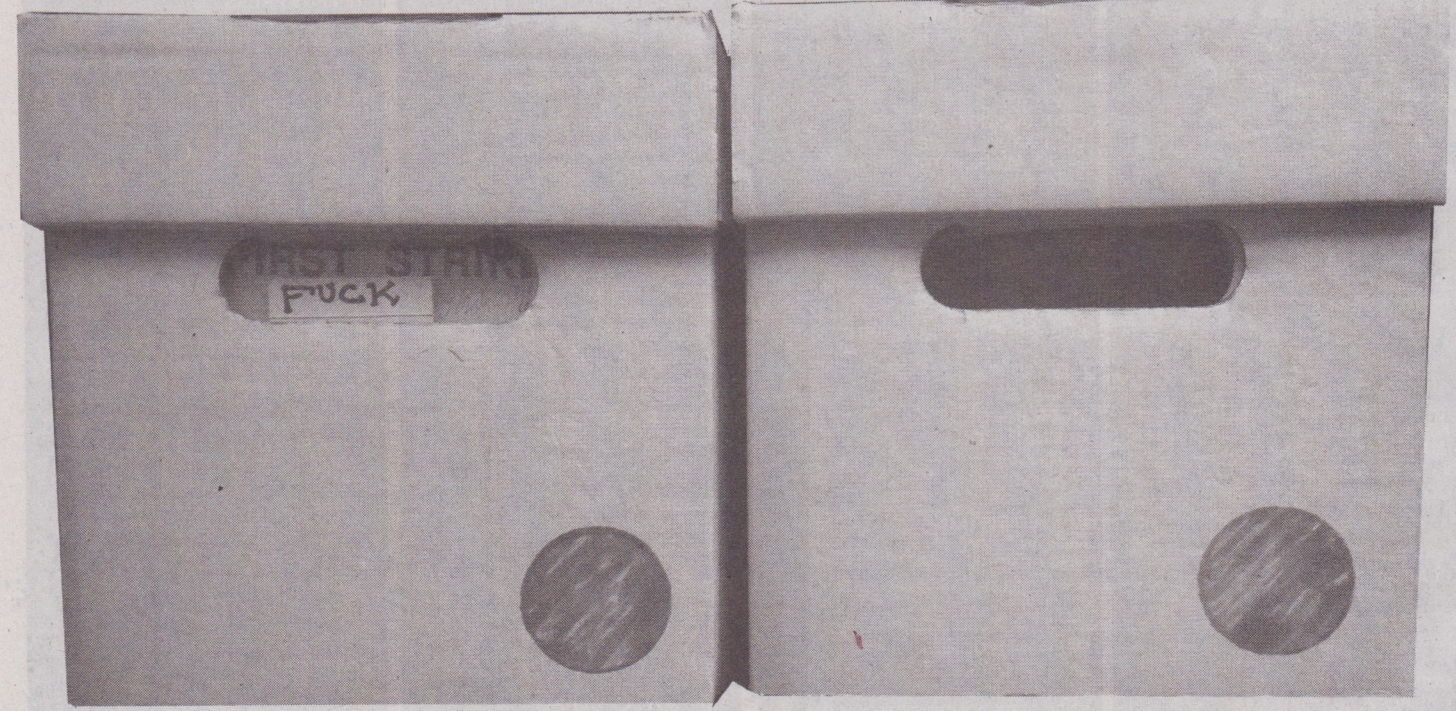

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LETTERS

Send letters to MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760,
or to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. No response guaranteed.

MRR Readers,

The Russian activist Dima Volzhsky needs help.

Who is that?

Dima is a 25-year-old punk activist from Tver, a small town near Moscow. He has organized dozens of local punk shows, volunteered at the animal shelter and orphanage, and worked on the DIY webzine sadwave.com. He had to give it all up because of his disease.

What's his problem?

Dima has Leber's hereditary optic neuropathy. It's a genetic disease and he's losing his sight every second. The doctors say he won't completely lose his vision soon, but any light blinds him. He can't read the text on the screen of any device. He can't read books or newspapers; can't write. He can't see people's faces even if they are a meter away from him. It's become common for people to approach him on the street and say "Dima, don't you recognize your friends?" The situation is gradually getting worse and worse. He hasn't worked for more than a year, since the summer of 2015, just because of his sight. Dima is under the care of his mother and they have very little money. Problems with sight means severe limits to activities. No money means severe limits to action.

How can you help?

Dima needs money to get things off the ground. For now it's not about millions of dollars (but this can happen if there are any delays and if he has to go abroad to have the treatment there), but at the current stage it may result in hundreds of thousands of dollars. You can send him some money via PayPal: deceivedxchild@gmail.com. He's also still looking for a proper medical institution abroad. If you have any contacts for the right people who could help, please let us know!

If you have any questions, please write to deceivedxchild@gmail.com or add Dima ofnFacebook! (facebook.com/dimafrmtvr).

—Maksim Dinkevitch

Maksim is a Russian MRR *shitworker. He told us how the Russian punk community has been gathering money and putting on benefit shows for Dima and asked if we could help promote the cause. If you can do anything to help, please reach out to Dima, whether it's with a donation or a supportive word. It's great when we help out the people in need in our local communities, but let's not forget there's a whole worldwide DIY community to participate in as well.*

◆

Dear *Maximum Rocknroll,*

Longtime reader, first-time writer. Hello!! Big fan of the latest issue, but wanted to offer a correcton to "Michael D.'s" Hair Long N Freeky review.

Michael quotes the following line:

> "The more I see Morrissey /
> the more I see, the more I see."

I actaully met "Otto" from the band a few weeks back and he told me the line actually reads as follows:

> "The more I see Morrissey /
> the more I seem more icy."

I agree with the reviewer's assessment otherwise. Keep up the good work!

Cheers,

Byrd "Turd" Sleurper

Thanks for the correction, Turd. As the punk paper of record, it's important that we get these things straight. Anyone reading this should feel free to tell us what we fuck up (and what we get right!). Drop us a line at the PO Box above.

◆

MRR has a live-in archivist now. Help us help you: archive@maximumrocknroll.com.

COLUMNS

THIS WORLD MAKES ME RALPH

A Brief Intermission; or, Silver Time

"I don't like it! It's too loud for my ears!" Gary shouted. He lived in the Black Time. Woodstock's promise of free minds and freer love naught but a hallucinogenic budling, this was a time of mental and spiritual unrest, political and societal upheaval tacked onto a paisley, technicolored backdrop. Young men burned their draft cards, the Black Panthers formed in defense of their embattled communities; Malcolm's murder nipping at the generation's heels, MLK's, Kent State, and the Stonewall Riots staring them down mere yards away. Gary fought in 'Nam, withered, then bloomed in the shadow of his parents' bomb. He traded in his fatigues for the drab, dusty duds of a holy man, the suits and ties of his peers for a hangman's noose worn 'round the neck like the latter. When he bowed, you'd see the bald pink crown of his head. He and his fellow MONKS met the absurdity of their time in kind, adopted a dark wit and gallows humor in the face of pervasive violence and an apocalyptic uncertainty. They pushed and poked, consumed with the vision of a necessary alternative. Gary Burger, a Midwestern boy like me, once shouted "I don't like it! It's too loud for my ears!" as I do now with an ever-increasing frequency. I don't like it, an understatement. I can't take another goddamn minute of post-HOAX schlock, not one more second of schmoozing, ingratiating punk-rock celebutantes blessed with a precognitive knack for scowling and spitting as the cameras shout "click-click-click!" These frauds, provided such large platforms with nothing of substance or value to impart, content to posture and spew platitudes. May the spectacle of slime punk be banished and scrubbed clean from the collective unconscious and a ten year moratorium be imposed upon American D-beat, then, for the moment, let us waste not another breath nor word nor drop of ink on these vapid husk-beings. We've more pressing concerns, if you can dig.

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I push and I poke. Like a wooden splinter beneath the skin, it ain't quite painful, but it's there; the mind gets overtaken with the singular purpose of eradicating a minor yet ever-present annoyance. A word stuck on repeat, interwoven into every thought and action, until you grasp it from the root, tear it free, "Ah, Ha!", and analyze what exactly made it hold with such stubbornness.

The prevailing theory is that Hardcore serves as some form of catharsis, that the basements, living rooms, and garages are meant to be safe havens for freaks and weirdos and outcasts to blow off the week's accumulated steam. If we're talking the neohippy cry-ins of '90s hardcore or the weekend blood rites of modern Palahniukian males, sure, to that end we have certainly succeeded, although I can't help noticing that no one seems any happier, no one seems even a fraction more whole. The crude approximations of pain and suffering, the much-lauded displays of affected angst and anger are clearly not working. For the entirety of this nearly 40-year infancy, we've been bashing our heads against a wall and calling it release. When do we start using that cranium-born crater to lift us up and over?

But really, what's the likelihood that what we're truly pondering here isn't so much "Can the wall be scaled?", but "Can meditating upon a cosmically inconsequential philosophical question for a few hundred words obscure the fact that your beloved columnist wrote himself into something of a corner?" Look, Jack, yeah, the truth is I wrote a few checks that my ass can't seem to cash quite yet. Hold on to 'em, just 'til next month. I'm still thinking about and planning to address the splendor that comprised the Bug's last moments in the nether regions of these United States, it's just that those peoples, places, and things, alongside my interactions with all manner of nouns at Still Not Quiet…, Everything Is Not OK, and the screening of Chicago hardcore documentary *No Delusions*, have contributed in no small part to my current preoccupation, that marrow-deep splinter: Hope.

This ain't no new age, quarter-life crisis. It's about growing. It's about the other side of the wall and the twinges of incipient revelation that came on a Saturday afternoon. In front of me, the MINNEAPOLIS URANIUM CLUB BAND. There in California, surrounded by strangers and thousands of miles from our respective homes, I watched a band completely in their element (big yuks all around). From the *Human Exploration* LP, to their live performances, right down to the fabricated historical documents and #2 pencils, this is a band that's left nothing out of place, the empty space remaining in the puzzle as intentional as what's been laid out thus far. Hypnotized by a swirling, peppermint maelstrom, I was consumed by what could only be characterized as a *vibe* at this point, one that carried me all the way to the late, late show. It carried on through the pummeling, careening car crash of MOZART's set and during AMERICAN HATE at the night's end, it possessed those in attendance and reverted them back to something primordial and animalistic. The weekend closed with IN SCHOOL, a band who supposedly hadn't practiced or even been in the same room together in half a year, once again proving themselves to be one of the finest examples of American Hardcore in existence and culminating in the utter violence of REPLICA's set. Night ends, breakfast the next morning, friends part ways, jobs suck. Surely this is all familiar, so I'll spare you the additional five paragraphs it would typically take for me to make a fucking point.

You know the answer, the ending was spoiled a paragraph ago. That vibe never left. When I think and overthink about the right now and all the way back to the first time I saw the name JOHNNY THUNDERS in a Transworld in eighth grade homeroom, there is no other word for that fucking vibe, one which connects you to something both vast and unknown and makes you feel as though anything is attainable. I'll concede that, used in the same sentence as hardcore, the word hope evokes a potent image of cherubic porcelain dolls clad in cargo shorts and dunks, the crowd gesticulating enthusiastically whilst screaming for change, precisely to what is a question neither posed nor answered. In regards to more significant topics, Black and brown bodies are still criminalized and snuffed out with impunity, the lives of the poor and people of color continue to be wagered in military entanglements entered into without even a consideration of an exit, and the mental, physical, and emotional well-being of women and LGBTQ individuals are effectively punchlines. Acknowledging the Black Time we're still living in, the suggestion of hope seems almost insulting.

Even so, dig this big crux: is it possible for us to drastically redefine the term as we understand it, from a naive concept which necessitates the purging of negative emotions for some nebulous "greater" good to one which allows for the harnessing of all emotions and all energies towards that aforementioned, though admittedly no less ill-defined, necessary alternative? Unequivocally, yes. I've felt hope, palpable, tangible, that allows for that interpretation. The high-concept hijinks of URANIUM CLUB, the dark yet juvenile wit of CCTV and CONEHEADS, the uncompromising ethics of FIREWALKER, G.L.O.S.S., LEMONADE, and PURE DISGUST, the Neanderthalic blunt force of AMERICAN HATE, MOZART, and Q; at home: BLEEDING GUMS, BRUISED, NEGATIVE SCANNER, NERDLE, RITALIN OD, and TIGRESS; elsewhere: the GARTERS, LIVIN' THING, the MELODONTS, NOSFERATU, PRYSS, TRASH LOBSTER, the WORLD; living rooms in Hattiesburg, head shops in Murray, punk utopias in Springfield; *Mental Whiff, Potential Friends, Seven Inches To Freedom,* and *United Slam* fanzines; most recently, being surrounded by a decade's worth of friends to say goodbye to SIN ORDEN, the band that made me proud to be brown; and, of course, the big three of Still Not Quiet…, Everything is Not OK, and the *No Delusions* screening, these are the things that have moved me, both my mind and my ass, these past few months. Through whichever medium art is administered, it should make you feel changed for the experience. Not quite complete, but certainly *more than*. Anything less is frivolous kitsch bullshit that I have zero time for. The boring, solipsistic notion, born of a want and need for nothing, that hope is quaint and outdated is utter fucking dogshit. I don't know exactly what comes next, but I can hazard some guesses. Support your friends, not just in their creative endeavors, but when they inevitably fall on hard times. You want unity? Fine, you fucking liberals, just remember that a unity that reinforces the same oppressive behaviors of norm society, that prioritizes the safety of abusers, and requires silence to maintain it is an empty and meaningless one. Challenge your conception of "good"-ness to mean something other than technical proficiency or the ability to emulate some hallowed archetype and recognize failure as a necessary component to all good rock'n'roll. Do the mutant shuffle, you fucks!, or just do anything that makes this place a less boring, more tolerable place to exist.

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In 1967, Gary Burger and the other four American GI's that founded the freak-beat rock'n'roll band the MONKS parted ways. According to rumors tucked into the corner of some dank, German basement is a reel containing evidence of the one that got away, their follow-up long player, *Silver Monk Time.* Harsh feedback laid over a single beat played with rote military precision, sprawled out over both sides of a twelve-inch slab of wax. Who's to say if this is anything more than *puro cuento*, but one can't deny that this was a band burdened by vision. They'd been in the shit, been a part of and seen the worst of what humanity had to offer, and flat out rejected it. Lampooned it, mocked it, but, if that title implies what I believe it implies, saw beyond it nonetheless. Burger, a Midwestern boy like me, passed away in 2014. He survived his war, but not long enough to see the Silver Time.

We do as you wie du be do be do be do. I still believe we can survive to see ours.

i don't think that i need to sit here with you fucking dildos any more

by Imogen Binnie

It's weird, right? We live in weird times. I remember like a decade ago reading people who were like, "Welp, times are different now, nobody is making money off music now, so now it doesn't count as selling out to have somebody sponsor your tour or to get a song into a Volkswagen commercial."

And I mean, I guess the way we talk about "selling out" has always been weird. Like a lot of the things that people flip out about—transgenderedists, America, sex work, president elect Donald Trump—the idea of "selling out" isn't just one complicated thing. It's a complicated thing that exists at a nexus of a bunch of other complicated things: capitalism, and idealism, and the idea that people should be compensated for their work, and the idea that art should exist outside capitalism, and the idea that some kind of meritocracy exists, and middle-class entitlement that's about feeling like you are special and therefore deserve not to have to have a job, and the reality that in order to make money from your work you are probably going to have to make concessions to The Market, and all our weird ideas about Art and Artists and Genius and Geniuses and Inspiration and Talent and Giftedness—and the reality that if you've ever been fucking broke, it is probably pretty understandable that you might want to be rich.

And, of course, that toxic trap present in most of the toxic things in this culture: the idea that purity is a possibility.

Whatever, dude, you're already reading *MRR*, you don't need me to tell you why it's a bad idea to try to have a song in a Volkswagen commercial. But I've been thinking about this stuff because while it might have seemed a few years ago like maybe things were getting weird or lines around this stuff were getting blurry, it seems like things have settled back into a pretty clear mainstream/underground dichotomy.

The thing that got me thinking about this is that G.L.O.S.S. had a track on a comp that got reviewed on *Pitchfork*. I mean, the comp didn't get reviewed on *Pitchfork*. The G.L.O.S.S. song did. That's weird! I feel weird about that!

One of the shameful skeletons in my own personal closet is that when I was younger, I had a close, personal relationship with *Pitchfork*. This was back when they were a bunch of bitchy (or whatever the dude version of bitchy is; probably just bitchy) indie rock snobs talking shit and putting themselves in charge of what was cool. You know: the journalism equivalent of the middle class white boy in college who binge drinks and treats women like shit and gets to be a dirtbag for four years until he graduates, cleans up, and gets a job at his dad's company. Which is almost literally the story of *Pitchfork*: they just got bought by Conde Nast and redesigned their website to be a little more tasteful. It's actually the same story as *Vice*. And I think *Rolling Stone*?

("How do you know so much about *Pitchfork*, Imogen," you ask. "If you're cool enough to talk shit."

I dunno, dude. I've got to keep up on my hipster metal somehow. Plus, how pure are you? Whatever.)

My first response to seeing bands I like on *Pitchfork* is always to feel kind of deflated. I mean, it doesn't feel like anybody's sold out. I don't think anybody from G.L.O.S.S. sent that track to *Pitchfork* like "Hey buds, please review this." But it just feels weird! To be like, this band that means a lot to me, now I am seeing them in a context full of stuff that doesn't mean *anything* to me. You know?

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I think that the idea of coolness might be fundamentally racist, at least here in the US.

I mean, my understanding is that the idea of coolness came out of African American communities and was absorbed by the "mainstream" (which, here in the US, usually means a white supremacist, classist, capitalist idea of what constitutes "normal," AKA the Blob). So even at its start, with its roots in cultural appropriation, the way we construct coolness is hella synecdochous with regard to what I am trying to be talking about here. (Quote me.)

But I'm thinking specifically, now, of how coolness works. What it does.

I lived in that place for a while. I think I've talked about this here before. Before I figured out that I was trans and that heterosexual middle class cis white dudeness was not going to be a town I could live in any more, I used to read *Pitchfork*. Like every day. And I remember very clearly about that time was the anxiety that came with understanding myself to be a straight white middle class cis dude.

This is not what we talk about in social justice warrior internet hate world. Right? I think those of us who are not straight white middle class cis dudes can fall into this trap of thinking that those guys have it pretty nice; and I mean, in a lot of ways, they do. But also? For me at least—and I think for a lot of people who live in that place—there's this awareness, on some level, that straight white cis guys live life on the lowest difficulty setting, that you've got it pretty easy, but also that since some stuff is still pretty hard, and other people don't seem to get that, in a way you feel like you have been cosmically slighted. Plus, there are *aaaaalll* these straight white cis dudes and we live in a culture in which men need to be *exceptional*, so there is all this pressure to be *exceptional*, and one of the best and easiest ways to be *exceptional*, probably, is to know the most about bands and to have the best opinions about them. (This difficulty setting idea isn't mine. Somebody named John Scalzi wrote an article about it. It's pretty good.)

Honestly: if that's you, I feel for you. I know that looks sarcastic. But I'm not kidding.

I mean, if that's you, I don't always think you're doing a great job, and I probably don't even really forgive you. I think occupying a precarious position at the top of the privilege pyramid makes you act in some weird ways so you don't fall off; we can talk about the fragility of masculinity, the way that holding a purse or standing near a homosexual when there are other straight men around can feel like the end of the world. Also? I know that got beat into you, that it's not your fault. I get that.

I want to acknowledge that it's real, and it sucks. I want to acknowledge that the anxiety—the fear that you could fall from the top of the privilege pyramid—that anxiety is real.

Anxiety sucks. But I think it can make people do weird things.

I think there's something about being in that position where on the one hand you are anxious that you'll fall from it somehow, but on the other hand you also know—you are aware—that your privilege puts you into a fundamentally bland or boring position. Right? You can't talk shit the way you used to. You long for your days of binge drinking and treating women like shit and getting away with it, but now you've got all this responsibility. And maybe you look around and you see people with legitimate critiques, articulating those critiques in legitimately powerful ways, and you think: whoa, I'm not edgy any more, but that is cool as hell.

Like you are on the inside, in the middle—the opposite of marginalized or outsider—and from where you're standing, being marginalized or an outsider doesn't look painful and frustrating, it just looks cool as hell. Different from what you're used to. Edgy. Novel.

You understand the aesthetics, but you can't hear the critique itself.

You want to be cool. In fact, for your brand to grow—which of course is a requirement—you kind of need to be cool. You've got to keep your brand *exceptional*. So you try to rope that thing in, make it part of your brand.

It doesn't feel to you like you're the Blob absorbing something powerful and turning it into more Blob. It feels to you like you're magnanimously extending a hand to the underprivileged or something.

This, of course, is what patriarchy looks like. This is paternalism. (This stuff is all connected. It's a Blob.)

The thing is, outsider status sucks in a lot of ways. But the Blob isn't interested in those instances of suck. The Blob is interested in everything *but* the suck part. Which gets weird when the message of the outsider is basically "all this shit you're doing sucks."

Look: at the risk of sounding like a fourteen-year-old zealot and recent convert to punk rock whose heart hasn't been destroyed yet, I'm not stressed about G.L.O.S.S. selling out. I don't think what G.L.O.S.S. is trying to do is consistent with what *Pitchfork* is trying to do. I don't want to speak for anybody, but my read of what G.L.O.S.S. is saying is something like: what if we decenter the guy who is in charge of *Pitchfork*? What if we decenter his target demographic?

That is not what *Pitchfork* is saying. *Pitchfork* is saying "this tent is big enough for all of us, as long as you accept that the music straight white middle-class cis dudes (and the culture around it) have opinions about—and those opinions themselves—and those dudes themselves—are the most important thing."

But that tent sucks and in the end I guess none of this is really confusing at all.

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I've just been thinking about it. I mean the point of this column isn't to bring you the hard-hitting news about establishment indie rock record review websites that, okay, yes, publish stuff by women I admire sometimes. It's just got me thinking about how thankful I am that I managed to get away from that world.

It's a trap, dude.

I don't mean to get all self-congratulatory, but this is why fucking *MRR* is still worth reading, right? After all these years? I didn't read the first couple hundred issues—I think I started reading *MRR* in the late nineties, back before I could even figure out how to listen to any of the bands in it, although who among us actually has a functioning memory—but why has *MRR* had a different trajectory than *Pitchfork* and *Vice* and *Rolling Stone* and, like, every other outsider thing that eventually became an insider thing?

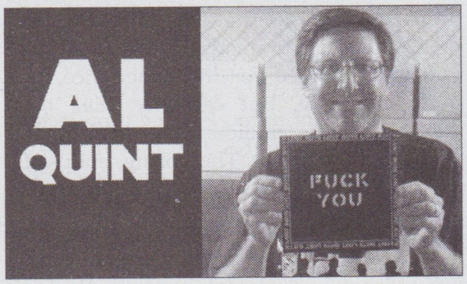
It's the humorless hardline DIY thing, dude. Nothing has changed about what capitalism and privilege and the Blob all do, how hard they work to absorb everything. Obviously none of us is fucking pure, but I keep thinking about the way that you see people make a concession to it, and then another, and then they're stuck in this impossible position where no amount of stands or concessions can get them to a place where they're okay—we have seen this story so many times, right?—that the only way not to tumble down that slippery slope is to be like "Dude. Fuck your slope."

Now that I'm thinking about it, I'm pretty sure that article about the "new rules about what counts as selling out" was on *Pitchfork*, back when *Pitchfork* was still supposed to be kind of cool.

ENDNOTES:

1) I started a podcast! It's called Imogen Watches Classic Films. As of this writing, I have watched the classic films *Elves*, *TerrorVision*, *10 Cloverfield Lane*, and all of the *Sleepaway Camp* movies. It's free! Google it or whatever. I record it in my car while I drive.

2) Alex pointed out that another word for "the Blob" is "hegemony."



PUNK ROCK ACADEMY FIGHT SONG

I'm in the middle of reading a book called *This Ain't The Summer Of Love: Conflict and Crossover In Heavy Metal and Punk* by Steve

Waksman. Waksman's first book, *Instruments Of Desire: The Electric Guitar and the Shaping Of Musical Experience* was based on his PhD dissertation. When it was published (2009), he was an associate professor of Music and American Studies at Smith College in Western Mass (which is where I picked this up—at a great used bookstore called Grey Matter, one of the best I've ever been to).

As you can imagine, this book reads exactly like what you'd expect from a music professor, i.e. at times, an overly academic treatment of the history of the intersection between metal and punk. It goes back as far as the '60s, bringing up the obligatory ALICE COOPER, IGGY POP, MC5, and DICTATORS references, although he also spends a fair amount of time with GRAND FUNK RAILROAD, who were critically excoriated but were incredibly successful in creating a direct bond with their audience.

Truth be told, while the book is enjoyable, it gets dry on occasion, such as when Waksman goes deeply into describing the chord structures of certain songs to give a feel for how they sound. The late, great Lester Bangs (who wrote for *Rolling Stone* and *Creem*, among others) used to do the same thing, describing the way the music sounded. But instead of musical theory, he'd use a description, like "THOONK THOONK THOONK A THOOMP THUM BOOMP" in reference to Jack Bruce from CREAM's bass playing. And since I'm pretty much a non-musician (I do know the low string on my bass is an E, at least), this is a better way of conveying how the music sounds. That said, the book is accessible, in-depth, well-researched, and covers a lot of ground. Even with its academic approach, you're never left wondering, "so what *is* this guy's point?"

Granted, punk has entered the realm of academia. I was in Western Mass to give a guest lecture at UMass. I've actually done it twice at UMass and also gave a guest lecture at Tufts University some years back. This course was called "Legacy of Brutality: Punk and American Underground Culture" and taught by Jonathan Skolnick, who is a professor of German Lit but also a lifelong hardcore fan. It was a one-credit pass/fail course. He covered the roots of punk from embryonic phase of the '70s up through the Riot Grrrl movement of the '90s, also covering various political and media aspects of punk. He titled my lecture "This Is Boston, Not LA: Local Identities and the Production of Culture." Pretty fancy title. In essence, I talked about the development of the Boston punk and hardcore scenes and how one strong characteristic was how it was influenced by Boston's parochial nature. I also tied in my personal experiences. I brought zines and flyers and showed some YouTube videos of live shows and music from the period. It was kind of odd talking about this stuff to an audience of college kids who weren't even born when this was going on. In spite of the fact that public speaking isn't really my forte (odd, since I sing in a band, DJ a radio show, and pontificate in various print and web outlets), it went pretty well. I'm still somewhat bemused that punk has entered the realm of cultural studies, but it's not all that surprising. It's an interesting topic. If I was at school now, I might have taken that course.

Without engaging in any sort of self-absorbed navel-gazing (for the most part), I don't think of myself as a great writer. Maybe that is a bit of self-deprecation, and some might say I'm fishing for validation, but that really isn't true. I'll leave that for others to decide, but after 30-plus years of writing record reviews, you have to become increasingly creative in coming up with new ways to describe what is basically a narrow musical universe. And since most of the records I listen to really aren't worth writing a dissertation about, I just try to get down to the nuts and bolts of the release at hand. Bottom line time—is it worth seeking out? Is there anything that special about it or is it merely competent? If you read between the lines (sorry for the cliché), you can probably figure out what records I find special and those that just don't do it for me. I suppose it falls into the "consumer guide" approach à la Robert Christgau, who pretty much invented the one or two paragraph record review and whose collections of those reviews provide some enjoyable bathroom reading from time to time.

I've gotten a bit of criticism over the years about my reviewing style. Back in the '90s, one guy said I used the word "vitriolic" too much and, since then, I've actually tried to use it sparingly. Some people have said I write too many positive reviews. I think it was former Boston musician Phil Milstein (CUL DE SAC, UZI, PEP LESTER, who's also done his share of music writing) who wrote that if you weren't giving mainly negative reviews, you weren't doing your job correctly. Maybe there's a point to that and I bend over too much to be Mr. Nice Guy. Maybe I'm not trying to come across as 100% jaded. But regarding negative reviews, my feeling is if it's not going to at least be listenable to me, then I'll forego the review, at least in this column. Maybe I'm not fulfilling my public service to steer people away from mediocrity but there's not always enough time to achieve that. If you really want to know what my thoughts are about something you don't see in the column, you can always drop me a line. I might not have the answer, but it's worth a shot, right?

I do like humorous, stream-of-consciousness pieces that go well beyond actually reviewing the record. In fact, it makes me a bit envious of those who have the skill to do that well—write something that's enlightening as well as witty. That means an absence of snarkiness, of coming across as a tedious know-it-all (OK, you can stop your finger-pointing!). Getting back to Lester Bangs, he used to do that with some of his record reviews. He wrote a brilliant essay called "Psychotic Reactions and Carburetor Dung" (which is also the title of a collection of his writing), where he essentially made up a fake history of the '60s garage band COUNT FIVE who in real life had one minor hit with "Psychotic Reaction" and then split up after one album. The album's hit and miss but the single is one for the ages—bargain basement YARDBIRDS, to be honest, but still scorching. Bangs tells the story from the future, regaling his grandchildren about how he came to acquire the Five's first album and goes on to laud the greatness of the band's subsequent forays into such things as progressive-minded symphonic rock (my description). That's except for their second album, *Carburetor Dung*, about which he opines that it might have been the grungiest-sounding album in rock history. It's a scream and done without pretense. Instead, it gets to the core of Lester's whimsical brilliance (shit—*I'm* writing like a fucking academic, here).

Another famous article of his was "James Taylor Marked For Death." The murder fantasy involving Taylor is mentioned only in passing. Instead, the article is mainly about the TROGGS and he ties it into both autobiographical musings and making the point that the primitive spirit of rock'n'roll had disappeared and needed to be reclaimed. These sorts of musings used to be called "think pieces" and, in the hands of a lesser writer, could become insufferable. That wasn't the case with Lester's writing.

His review of the STOOGES' *Fun House* is probably around 10,000 words long (no, I didn't count them, I'm taking a guess) and it does provide a blow-by-blow description of the album, also placing it in context of what was going on at the time (late 1970) and what it might have drawn from. It's a sometimes meandering read but also commands your attention and you don't feel as though he's jerking you around or being condescending in any way, shape, or form. He even admits that *"record reviews start to get precious and self-aggrandizing when they become too autobiographical."* The difference between Lester and others is he could pull it off.

Bottom line? To quote SPINAL TAP, there's a fine line between stupid and clever... um, I actually mean insufferable and clever. Sometimes, you can overanalyze things and fail to reach an understandable conclusion. Kind of like this piece. But it's just punk rock. It's not that complicated.

I think it's time to read "Psychotic

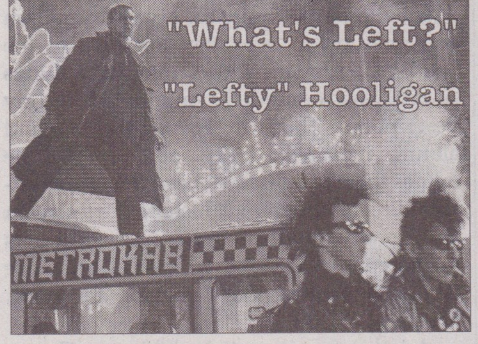
Reactions and Carburetor Dung" again and see how it's done...

Next time, I'll make a stronger effort to tackle the review backlog.

A BIT OF SHAMELESS SELF-PROMOTION

The live Sonic Overload show has moved to a new station and time—it can now be heard on Old FX Punk Radio on Wednesdays from 9 to 11 pm eastern at oldfxpunkradio.com. It's a cool station. You should check out.

Al Quint, PO Box 43, Peabody, MA 01960,
sonicoverload.net, subvox.blogspot.com,
subvox82@gmail.com



It's June. I've been on Facebook six months now. You'd think someone who was an IT guy would be all over that, and I must admit the whole Zuckerberg = Satan equation had a lot to do with me not getting on Facebook sooner. After all, I email, I blog, I surf the worldwide intrawebz. It was inevitable I would make a pact with the devil sooner or later.

The Facebook shit is part of my social media strategy to publicize my second novel when I publish it, but it has been pretty interesting in its own right. I'm still figuring out the "Friends" thing, so I clicked on someone's profile who had a mutual friend, as Facebook so kindly pointed out. His profile came up with "Friends: 3,316 (1 mutual)" and I clicked through, wondering how anyone could accumulate so many digital acquaintances. Turns out, 3,000 of them were Bernie Sanders supporters, most of whom had incorporated the Bernie meme into their profile picture, often with their selfie plus words like "Feel The Bern," "Not Me, Us," "I Am A Democratic Socialist," "Bernie or Bust," or just "Bernie." Sometimes, the profile picture was a soulful photo or graphic portrait of Bernie in unabashed adulation. I'd stumbled upon a secret cell of *Sandernistas,* only they were just a bunch of Facebook "friends."

The Democratic National Convention is next month, and Hillary's coronation is assured. Bernie doesn't have the delegates and he's pledged not to resist Clinton's nomination. I can't help wondering what anger or soul-searching is in progress among those "friends" on Facebook, and how many will remain friends come August or November.

Before Bernie's candidacy maxed out shy of the nomination, his presidential run deeply divided the Left. So, what else is new? The Left gets deeply divided over what to order from the deli, so Bill Scher's 2-4-16 story in *Politico Magazine* ("Why Socialists Can't Wait for Bernie to Lose") is somewhat predictable and clichéd. In that old joke about what kind of firing squad the Left would form, the punch line being a circle of guns pointed inward, there's already disagreement over whether to make the firing squad a triangle or square instead. Bernie calling himself a democratic socialist has not only raised the word and a discussion of socialism to the fore in the American public, it motivated actual democratic socialists to support and campaign for him. The Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) has endorsed Bernie and is actively campaigning and canvassing for him. Same with Socialist Alternative (SA). In the parlance of the Left, both are pre-party formations or activist organizations, not political parties or mass organizations.

My coverage of *Jacobin Magazine*'s range of opinions on Bernie's campaign covers the thoughtful, non-dogmatic Left—from Bernie's "moving the discussion to the left and mobilizing an absurdly high number of people" to contending that he is "this election's Democratic sheepdog […] charged with herding activists and voters back into the Democratic fold who might otherwise drift leftward and outside of the Democratic party." (*MRR* #389) Then we have the leftover Left; the serious third party electoralists and dogmatists, the sectarians and vanguardists, the wreckers and splitters. That last phrase was what Communist Party members used to call Socialist Workers Party Trotskyists before the CP turned social democratic and Trotskyism splintered into oblivion. The CP has even given Bernie its reticent support by not running its own slate of candidates in 2016. So, what about the leftover Left?

Let's recap Scher's dissection of Jill Stein and the Green Party of the United States, but not without pointing out that this fully electoral, national Green Party (henceforth GP) is not associated with the non-electoral Greens/Green Party USA or the meta-electoral Association of State Green Parties (which encourages the formation of independent Green parties on the state level). Right away, you can see why I put the Green Party phenomenon into the leftover Left category as none of these different entities get along or have a chance of winning crap. Because anyone can become a member of the GP, and because those members then determine who runs under the party imprimatur, the GP has occasionally become the pawn of lefty vanguard parties like the Workers World Party or the Party for Socialism and Liberation who run their leadership as GP candidates. My old Peace and Freedom Party is chronically exploited for its reputation and ballot access by such Leninist relics.

"Do you root for Bernie as an almost unique chance to get millions of people to think seriously about socialist ideals, or against him for planting a false flag of revolution? And if you expect him to lose in the end—which, to be fair, most socialists do—should you ride the train as far as it goes, or get off it now and throw your energy into the real revolution?" Such are the dilemmas dividing the Left as Scher sees it, who then argues "[i]n many ways the split is most acute around the Green Party."

The dilemma of whether to "build the party" or to "build the movement," identified by Scher with respect to Stein's Green Party candidacy, has been around at least as long as Lenin's "What is to be Done?" Lenin himself came down heavily for building the socialist party, and that building the socialist party *was* building the socialist movement for Lenin. After the party, the priority is for a party newspaper to announce, propagandize, and recruit for the party, but I'm not doing Lenin 101 here. As a footnote, Lenin's electoral strategy was entirely utilitarian, subservient to the needs of the party to seize state power by any means necessary.

But what was footnote has become scripture for many socialists who then split hairs and fracture organizations. As a consequence, "there are plenty of parties: the Socialist Party USA, Peace and Freedom, Socialism and Liberation, Socialist Equality, Socialist Workers, and Workers World," to name but a few. All agree the party is paramount, but what is the party's strategy? Is it solely parliamentary, devoted to educating the masses and hopefully winning elections, like the Socialist Party? Or is it proudly revolutionary, eschewing any electoral involvement for politics in the streets and hell bent on seizing power, like the Revolutionary Communist Party? Is it conveniently electoral, seeking to move the Democratic Party to the left in the process and quietly deferring to the Democrats over the Republicans as the lesser evil, like many third party supporters of Bernie Sanders? Or is it opportunistic, switching between strategies as the times dictate and occasionally running their leadership as candidates in surrogate parties, like the Party of Socialism and Liberation?

Stein's GP is independently electoral and one of a half dozen third parties in the electoral popular front called LeftElect, which includes "Socialist Party USA presidential nominee Mimi Soltysik. (Other socialist candidates already announced are Gloria La Riva of the Party of Socialism and Liberation and Monica

Moorehead of the Workers World Party. The Peace and Freedom Party, another LeftElect participant, is deciding whether to endorse Stein, La Riva, Moorehead, or a fourth candidate now running as an independent.)" Scher gets it that the fight for ballot access in our electoral system is all consuming and that whether to run one's own candidates or support a progressive Democratic candidate like Sanders is a life-and-death decision for most electoral third parties. Ralph Nader's high profile run for president in 1996 and 2000 on the GP ticket no doubt helped that party with recognition and recruitment until it didn't and the Bush/Gore Florida hanging chads controversy overshadowed everything else. Stein herself expects Bernie to lose, giving her GP an opportunity to enlist "soon-to-be disgruntled Sanders voters." As Sher quotes Stein in conclusion: "'let this be a learning experience, the teachable moment' for Sanders backers, so they will discover that 'political revolutions that start in the Democratic Party, unfortunately, they die in the Democratic Party.'"

Which brings me full circle to the hordes of disappointed Bernie supporters come July. I registered Peace and Freedom Party in 1971 when the voting age was lowered to 18. Somehow, I never got the memo from Anarchist Central not to vote because it only encourages and I've been voting ever since. On the heels of the electoral tumult in 1968, when Robert Kennedy was assassinated and Eugene McCarthy's loss, I colluded with fellow anarchists and a cadre of New American Movement lefties to run for city council and board of education in Ventura on an anarcho/democratic socialist ticket. We lost resoundingly, but we did get a countywide bus system out of the deal by moving all the other candidates to the left. Then Nixon defeated McGovern in the landslide 1972 elections. I'd campaigned for McGovern, handed out literature, even did some precinct walking. I was distressed over McGovern's loss and angry that Nixon's win portended impending fascism, but I also became acutely aware of the limitations to the electoral process through these experiences.

I never took American elections seriously again, or more precisely, I finally put them into perspective. Voting and elections do change things, but only incrementally, and are worth only an incidental amount of my attention. The notion that any voting or electoral participation at all legitimizes the entire *bourgeois* corporate-state edifice is as much sophistry and mythology as is the official American ideology that voting and elections make a real difference. I continued to register Peace and Freedom Party until changes to the California electoral process forced me to choose between being a member of that party and participating in the Democratic Party primaries. Now I get a ballot by mail every two years, fill it out in under ten minutes, and put in the post, then be done with electoral politics for another two years.

It's not difficult to predict that chaos will reign both inside and outside the RNC in Cleveland come July. Much harder is to predict what will happen in and around the DNC in Philadelphia. Bernie's supporters certainly will push their quasi-socialist agenda and protest when they're shot down, but will they start floor fights and fist fights, walk out of the convention, defect to one or another third party, or riot in the streets? Or will they bite their lip, hold their nose, and in the end vote for Hillary?

My crystal ball is clouding up.

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA...
Author website: gamatiasz.com
Personal blog: gamatiasz.wordpress.com
Political blog: leftyhooligan.wordpress.com
Facebook profile: facebook.com/GAMatiasz
Publishing website: 62milepress.com

Totally
Lame
with Neve Be

Ahamefule J. Oluo performed his stand up comedy storytelling/big band musical "Now I'm Fine" this past weekend at the Moore Theater in Seattle for a packed house. I will say right now that I am using every opportunity to talk about this show because it got right inside of me with an allen wrench and loosened everything I have.

Ahamefule's show was some of the most imaginative mixed media art I have ever seen. Though I will say he is not a punk, there is perhaps nothing more DIY than teaching yourself every instrument ever while healing with a flare-up of an autoimmune disease and then having a large band, replete with harp, trumpet, tuba, trombone, bass trombone, upright bass, violins, piano, drums, a queer Black vocalist poet dancer—Okanomodé Soulchilde, who also wrote all the lyrics to full as fuck songs that you wrote the music to—tell the painful and growing parts that you cannot tell with jokes or without music.

Ahamefule opened with a joke that everyone sort of got but few got with as much passion as I, letting loose my lyre bird screech laugh. He was describing a person who talked to him on the bus as a "Juggalesque crusty punk." The mostly fine arts audience did not get this, but laughed anyway, perhaps because the word "crusty" is weird.

"Let me paint a picture. He didn't have a dog with him—" pause to smile, "But if he had a dog, it would have been on a rope instead of a leash." Ah, oogles, a breed so close to my own. I was called an oogle more than once—for being unhygienic in public, houseless, and creatively eyebrowless. Generally, I feel this self-conscious protective feeling with my laughter. Like I can laugh about dirty punks, but you can not. I wish he had known the word oogle, but he was not a punk. I also wish he had explained the word Juggalo—A thing I never want to be associated with, but a reference you can perhaps more accurately put your slippery little finger on than oogle. Punks are not an oppressed group, technically. Or are we, LOL? We are when we are poor or houseless or mentally ill, disabled, black or brown, deemed ugly, femmes, transwomen, gender nonconforming, undocumented immigrants, indigenous, children, sex workers, single moms, etc.

I came to find that I had more in common with Ahamefule than I probably did with the crust punk to which he was referring. But this quietly irked me. His new friend on the bus persisted:

"Noooo you look so familiar, I just can't put my finger on where I know you from!"

"Uh, I don't know, are you perhaps a patron of the fine arts?" This was punctuated with another smile and eyebrow pause, and the audience did get this. What they got was that, in all likelihood, people who look like they would keep their dog on a rope do not appreciate theater. But really, what is a punk show but theater? I like to think of myself as a writer on shows (punk shows, specifically), punk spaces generally, but more accurately, I think and write about performance. And that includes the kind of gorgeous clean spectacles worthy of the Moore Theatre. I know, it's a cheeky, cute joke for cheeky, cute people who are not hating on homeless people, but only the intentionally trashy punks who like intentionally trashy things like trash and trash art. The juggalo or oogle goes on to say:

"No, I remember where it is I know you from! We went to high school together! You were the guy that had *no* friends. Like even the nerds had their nerd friends, but you just had zero friends."

"Yes, I recall. Thank you, I was there."

I relate so intimately to Ahamefule's youthful yet seasoned love of music, his biraciality, his experience of acute medical trauma and trauma surrounding having a falling apart body (and did I mention trauma?), his potent pathos, his smirky and occasionally painful humor. He is the son of a Nigerian chief and a white working class mother who was a single mother by the time he was a month old when his father went for a visit home and decided never to come back. Ahamefule's name means "Let my name not be forgotten," but for much of his life he interpreted this to mean that he should do something badass with himself, like become a professional trumpet player, with gumption and juice alone. The one and only time Ahamefule talked to his father on the phone before he died, he was a teenager and his father said he was disappointed in his choices. That really sucks. And as someone whose patrilineage is dubious (and the location at which my Africanness occurs), and as someone who feels dubious about patrilineage in general, I relate to searching for your Mufasa (Aham's analogy, not mine) who will let you know that he is proud, even if he has to let you know via post-mortem cloud visitations. Culturally and etymologically, though, Ahamefule means "Let my name not be forgotten" from the father's perspective. Ahamefule goes on to understand that this was the declaration of a selfish man who would leave his family to start another but still desire that his name not be forgotten through the life of the children he abandoned. It is fucking hard to criticize your marginalized family. But when your dad is Black and your mom is white it is also necessary to understand what patriarchy does. And I think as a Black man with experiences of alienation around his body, Ahamefule J. Oluo does. His words before he turns around and kicks up the band again are "My name is Ahamefule J. Oluo. Let *my* name not be forgotten."

And this is when I cried almost as loudly as I had laughed. I have spent most of my life trying to psychically make the Sudanese father (who condescended to women and hated Black American people, who never cared to meet me or know me) love me and be proud of me. I have grown up with a Black father, and there is a small chance he is my biological father, too, a chance I have clung to in the moments when I was not heavily repping being Sudanese, a thing I don't know how to be any more than I am. But I am a Black person. I am a disabled person. I am a gender fluid grryxl punk. I cannot be a mirror image of either of my parents because I am both and my experiences make me something else entirely. I cannot fully be like anyone I can relate to either. What if Ahamefule knew that the person who could most fully laugh at his punk joke was a punk? And a patron of the fine arts? In fact, we make fucking fine art even when it is gross art, too. I selfishly wonder, "Would he like me?" Would he relate to me if as a sex worker I told the same story of trying to cut something out of my pubic hair? Would he feel me if I shared with him my own body horror in the wake of doctors telling me the wrong things too? Would he relate to me? I like him. I hope so. I can't tell you all the things that made me cry, but luckily neither can Ahamefule, as one of the most crucial, crisisistic [sick], life altering [sick] moments in his life was described only with instrumentation. Later he also made a joke about 40s of OE and white moms and death rituals and the complexity of people's lived lives. So like I'm saying, we have a *lot* in common.

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I am floating in between fish bowls. My access and living situation is in transition. By the time this issue or the next is out, my queer family and I will be living fuller time in Seattle. I am stoked about this. I love the punks and the sex workers and the fine artists there. And a lot of people are all three. I also love the disabled people and the black people and the queer people there. And the disabled Black artist/sex worker/queer punks! What the fuck? I am jazzed.

Speaking of jazz! I was fired from my job! More specifically, everyone was fired, and there is no job to speak of. But the writers still exist. *Harlot Magazine* is now another online zine being awkwardly community funded in its own right. So visit the ever rotating gang at harlot.media and rest assured that they are no longer being held aloft by a white sugar mama professor/heir to imperialism with politics on loan, who when push came to shove, said, "You all think I owe you a job because you're marginalized." Actually we didn't. The point is, we never thought we were owed anything. I am back to being a gig-to-gig alley cat. This is both comforting and unnerving. Having a salaried job was unnerving to begin with, and I was kind of embarrassed to tell you about it. By the time I got used to feeling a little proud, especially of our content and our commitment to our politics, it was over. Oh well. Hustlers gotta hustle.

You can hear my interview with comedian/journalist Nia King of mixed/black zine notoriety and host of podcast *We Want the Airwaves*, where she interviews ATPOC artists. I talk a lot about Lana Del Rey and how people still think it's okay to make fun of sex workers and disabled people on TV. I don't give a shit how I sound to people who think they're cool, but I know I'm cool/lame, and I think you'll like it. I am trying to make a movie with Nikki Silver about mental illness/chronic anxiety being a superpower (tentatively titled *Diathesis)* and I'm hoping some punks will soundtrack it. Want to? So far my ideas are Diversions (from Seattle, not that other band) and Mozart? I am listening to Mozart as I finish up this column and I'm freaking out. So good.

Once in Seattle, I plan to finally be bored and desperate enough for community connection that I eschew my social anxiety surrounding making music and start a band. After hearing Okanamodé's vocals (which would have made Stevie Wonder circa *Songs in the Key of Life* more than proud) and starting to write songs myself again, I realize that what Nomy Lamm said to me once is true—"Oh, you want to sing BIG."

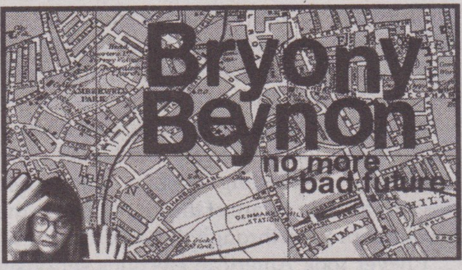
Accessibility Shout-outs and Endnotes:

1) The shows I went to this past month and some change were Now I'm Fine at the Moore Theatre (which is moderately accessible for wheelchair, with a ludicrous multilevel steep ramp to the accessible bathroom worthy of performance art), Joanna Newsom at the Fox Theatre (which is *very accessible* for wheelchairs), and Wheelchair Sports Camp/Wheelgrabbers at LCM, which I've shouted out before and is moderately accessible. A lot of sick crips came out for WSC's show. Backpack rap at its true finest—"It's hard out here for a gimp" kills. Such a sweet person and dope MC with sickening live horn and drums!

2) I have decided I am no longer going to go to shows that are straight up wheelchair inaccessible. I cannot evaluate other kinds of accessibility accurately if I have to fucking be carried up or downstairs—fuck that.

3) I have also decided that I am going to talk about shows that are not just punk shows because I am a punk and I like shows.

You can catch me as I fall into the internet—just email foxlovesriver@gmail.com!



American February Part Two

After a night in a Big Sur motel among the redwoods and firs, where strange men wonder and stranger women wander, we make a stop at a lodge for a ridiculous breakfast where all the staff seemed to whisper, addressing everyone as "sweet pea." I don't feel even slightly annoyed.

We stop at the Henry Miller Memorial Library, actually a shack full of books about using massage to enhance your love life, which feels amusingly appropriate for the types liable to drool here. Know your audience, indeed. One of us (names withheld to protect the guilty) blocks the toilet so badly we have to make a quick getaway. Pooped on for misogynistic literary farts, justice comes eventually.

The sudden flattening out of the landscape feels jarring. Having come to terms with the teetering cliff sides, cloud mountains fall away and within moments we're staring at miles of ("Wait, what are those?!") artichoke and asparagus farms. The sun feels like the moon. It feels like being pulled from under a mound of textured covers and lain on a flat, cold mattress. A painted sign advertises deep fried artichokes. We nearly u-turn for them. Later, passing San Jose and some oddly spaced out traffic in the other lane. There is a long, black car with little flags decorating its edges. I add Obama to the snake and the eagle in the list of "stuff we saw on the road." I'm charmed by the opportunity to use vocabulary I have no use for anywhere but here. Motorcade. It's the presidential motorcade. We check our instinctive excitement in for some cynicism ("obviously fuck the president") and he's gone again in a flash. Not quite a deep-fried artichoke, either. We jam tunes, Minutemen into Kate Bush, and follow our noses through into San Mateo county past the town of Colma, where corpses outnumber the living by one thousand to one. They bury the bodies there because San Francisco cannot take the weight of its own dead. No headstone kisses for Dee Dee equivalents here. My stupid love affair with this stupid peninsula started nearly a decade previously, and here I am again, on the eve of my thirtieth birthday. Grace, still driving, needs help with exits for a second, and I catch myself bluffing that I know the way. I don't, of course, but these cross streets still hold something. Page Fell Oak Hayes Grove Fulton. Nostalgia for previous incarnations of yourself, the dreams you might have had. An HBO doc I watched on the flight about tech industry doom has me fearing the worst, and my chest flutters as I watch the pastel houses on the hills come into view. No different to London or any other neoliberal shitheap, but if you squint, it's almost like nothing has changed. I kid myself for the purposes of holiday. You've still got it, baby.

Our weekend in the Bay passes quickly with cheap beer, many reunions—some warmer, some colder, many that feel like coming home. Highlights are the Bug and Mozart in a ballroom. Ralph Rivera and the Salient Points. Ralph Rivera and the 2 am Donuts. Ralph Rivera. I laugh so much I need my asthma pump. We walk through Golden Gate Park and I face myself realizing I'm in deep the meat of adulthood, blessed with luck to return and return to places that feel good. I get my mosh wings back at 924 Gilman for In School, watching my dream hardcore band of friends from too far away in a venue I've never been to before but have referenced a million times in many contexts. It's... dark. In School's new hit, "Cement Fucker," rolls around my head and will continue to for the next three months. Then Replica plays, a storm of unrelenting rage. Punks punk, someone calls a skinhead a racist, nothing changes. We take photos outside afterwards, then it is time to say goodbye to the city blocks, the static traffic, and head back into nature again. Not before doing some ill advised Monday night karaoke with members of Uranium Club, though, a group who project the collective vibe of genius serial killer car mechanics. I finally recognize myself as a deep karaoke punisher, forcing the host to change songs several times, picking the wrong song and having to ad-lib a soulful "I'm dying up here" for a verse and a half of an En Vogue banger. Surrender to the rhythm. A woman chooses "Morning has Broken," a legitimate hymn for fucksake, for her next song, and I feel less bad about the punishment.

Back in LA. They have lost my luggage. Ben is full of quiet rage, I am fine, happy to be facing my fear, buying some weird clothes for the next day (my birthday), and finally driving. There is the strange go-kart disconnection of driving an automatic car. Constantly poised to grab the gearstick. I am already squinting at the strange bloodless arteries between each place we go, a city divided by them. The freeways pump along one person per vehicle, neighborhoods linked by these throttling fuel filled un-places, we pootle along a ten miles an hour and I feel as clichéd in my disgust as I do in my curiosity; excitement. Every song on the radio is Drake or Drake-lite. We love Drake but pledge to buy an aux cord before the desert.

We arrive in the dark. I am not someone who regularly cries, let alone over the beauty of the natural world, because I am not a fucking hippy. But I'm here to admit it. Six hours later, palsied from the weekend traffic we swam in, climbing a hill, following the GPS, and hoping the road under us remains a road of some description. It went suddenly vertical and we seemed to drive directly into the sky. It's hard to describe the dark. My life is three decades long and this honestly looks like space. I might just be deliriously tired, but everything shatters and my breath tastes new. Navy-black sky with big white holes is bigger than I've ever seen sky. The moon feels like the sun. I sob for a full two minutes then pump out microwaved soyrizo from its little plastic shaft into a couple of chalky tacos.

We explored the Mojave Desert on my birthday. Lost in the smooth rocks of Joshua Tree, we panic-buy water and push through into the nothing. The calm of an unnarrated National Park. America does this very, very well. Wilderness medicine. This world is a huge and wild place, and California swings eternal, like a Noah's Ark of all civilization, at least one example of every possibility flora, fauna, and human life, here in this strange borderland state of extremity. Everything's a must have. "This is insane" becomes a verbal tick. As if the crushing cities are not crazy.

Back in SF, Greg had described the Salton Sea to us as a monument to American failure, his favourite genre of attraction, so we knew we had to go. As the mountains disappeared and the valley holding Coachella and endless retirement villages, we saw so many palm trees planted in perfect rows they began to appear like a word you've said too much that loses all its meaning and becomes just an uncanny sound. Their fronds spiking out along the 111, becoming indistinguishable from the sleek white of the wind farms, suddenly gone again as we edged towards the Mexican border where the Salton Sea's sulfur hits you in the nose. It's nearing up on 5 pm and we're desperate to see Salvation Mountain in the adobe-mud flesh. Racing against the light, the sunset seems to last for hours. The GPS says we have four minutes to get there. Outraged to be in a place beyond the reach of satellites, we have only an approximate address and a heightened fear of the dark. We take U-turns and nearly have to off road it to turn around. Where the fuck is this place? What are we even looking for. No sign of human life. The nearly abandoned corner store watches me pant across the store as the light fades outside. "Just follow this road about three miles. You can't miss it." You really can't. Clichéd interests in folk art fly out the window as the stunning colors fare up against the sky. Truth, beauty, and evangelism. Aren't we all? He daubed bible verses into the mud with latex paint, one of a generation on the run, everyone attempting to escape something, created a monument to faith and forgiveness, of course they saw God in these mountains, of course. There is still an outsider community here at the end of the world. The hand-painted sign at the entrance to the dirt road in the shadow of the desalination plant reads "Slab City: the last free place on earth."

As we leave this strange hinterland, sated by our desperate photography, a border guard waves us down at a checkpoint to ask in a heavy accent who we are and where we have been. It's a sudden bump back down to the ground. "The last free place on earth."

On our last day, back in the city, cruising a tiny Botánica on Sunset Strip, I buy a bottle of purple oil with the words "I Dominate Man" printed on it. Ben buys some brown dust in a bag. As we hand over the last of our crumpled dollars, the owner offers some sage instructions for effective use of these charms, lingering on them in his hands as he puts them into a brown paper bag and passes them to us. "You just have to really believe it."

TURBO
&
GANG
STILL THE NEW BREED

"South of Modesto,
progress growing day by day.
South of Modesto,
the future sucks in every way."
—Metal Mike, "South of Modesto"

"I hope there's always snow in your driveway
I hope you never get off Fridays
And you work at a Friday's
That's always busy on Fridays."
—Chance the Rapper, "Baby Blue"

"When the door flies open
Hot wind approaches you
Feel the heat, boy
Feel the heat as it burns your balls off."
—The Misfits, "Death Comes Ripping"

The Pounding of the Drums, the Pride and Disgrace

Cavebros rejoice! Neanderwomyn revel! Genderfuck troglodytes resound! It's never too late to crop your hair and tattoo a tiny cross on your forehead. This Oi!'s for you! If this Oi!'s not for you, maybe you and a few fellow penis-wrinkles can take a self-driving Uber to Wrinkle Fest and catch all the newest in wrinklecore and post-wrinkle bands. How do you find out where this penis-wrinkle fest is being held? It's easy: close your eyes and think of a friend that dislikes Oi! And bam! Wrinkle Fest is taking place at their house right now! Get ta steppin', brother.

Here's to the rest of yinz!

ARCH RIVALS – *One More Round* LP/CD/CS (Randale): Whatta way to start off this month! ARCH RIVALS are a bunch of hard working Janners from Plymouth. *One More Round* is their first LP, and what a banger it is! In the best way possible, ARCH RIVALS are redolent of the mid-'90s Oi!/street punk sound (early DROPKICK MURPHYS and ARGY BARGY come to mind). Their songs are tough and serious but remain levelheaded and forgo the hackneyed violence and braggadocio that lesser bands build their albums on. But don't be confused: ARCH RIVALS are a band of skins and punks and they sing about the typical shit skins and punks sing about, just at a higher level than many. You get songs about the trials of the working class, friends passing away, hating cops, football (soccer), losing rent due to poor choices, and, of course, being a skinhead. Read these stern words from the song "On Our Own," which is about the waxing and waning of the skinhead cult: *"Playing rebels at the weekends/ What a bunch of fucking bell ends / 2-Tone tattoo on his shoulder / He's a skinhead now he's got older / She got herself a Harrington / They're all fucking embarrassing!"* Brilliant album. Up the RIVALS!

HARD LUCK – *Face Reality* CS (self-released): From Brunswick, Germany, the young punx of HARD LUCK deliver six tracks of hardcore steeped in Oi! riffs and radiating a bushel worth of brick-paved bad attitude. If you ever wondered what OXYMORON would sound like playing HOUNDS OF HATE covers, your answer lies in HARD LUCK. And if you want more SHEER TERROR vocals in your life, here's another band that has that sound. Wall of death your way over to HardLuckPunx.bandcamp.com and get a copy.

KOMINTERN SECT – *D'Une Même Voix* CD/CS (Contra / Tape or Die): First wave French punk/Oi! frontiersmen KOMINTERN SECT are back after a 30 year absence! The members have remained active in punk (drummer Thomas plays in LION'S LAW with Wattie, who sings for RIXE...snort!) and it shows on the new mini-album. The recording is fuller than their '80s output and there is a keener sense of melody and musicianship, yet the songs remain spry and continue to be grounded in a cloud of melancholic spite and disaffection, a sound which they aided in becoming an earmark of French Oi! You get six songs, one of which is a cover of CAMERA SILENS classic "Pour La Gloire." Normally I'm bored when a band puts up a well-worn cover like "Pour La Gloire." Ya feel me? I need to hear the DUNDERHEADS version of "If the Kids are United" like I need to hear your version of "Tha Thong Song." But KOMINTERN SECT bring in Benoit, the vocalist for CAMERA SILENS, and instead of it being boring or repetitive, it comes off as a reunion of sorts. It works. And the five originals are absolute stunners as well. KOMINTERN SECT have pulled off a difficult feat: returning to a scene they helped create with a relevance and vibrancy that puts them back into the upper echelon of current Oi! bands. *De premier ordre!*

GRADE 2 – *Mainstream View* CD/10" (Contra): Skinhead started as a youth subculture ("as sharp as a knife"); a bunch of angry and bored fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen-year-olds running around their dumpy neighborhoods. It's morphed into a scene mostly populated by a bunch of drunken Peter Pan gwampas who are either fat (moi) or ripped outta their brains on 'roids. Well, GRADE 2 is keeping it really real. These dudes aren't even twenty! When they started, one of their members was just fifteen. With such a young band, I was expecting impetuous rage or at least a bit of juvenile anger (think: PETER AND THE TEST TUBE BABIES). But none of that is present on *Mainstream View*. It's not a bad album at all. If you like BOOZE & GLORY or OLD FIRM CASUALS you'll enjoy GRADE 2. Vocalist Jack Chatfield has a great voice for Oi! It's gruff and powerful, yet remains clear enough to almost make the lyric sheet superfluous. The playing on the album is also of high quality. Still, there is a businesslike residue about it all. Take the lyrics to the enjoyable opening track, "All I Know": *"I can't be stopped when I'm in the zone / 'Cuz this is all that I've ever known...Around the world you'll find our scene / Strength thru Oi! is curing me!"* This shit feels meta: eighteen-year-olds channeling forty-year-olds channeling eighteen-year-olds. There is a song about dealing with a codependent relationship. I don't know...I'm gonna go listen to "Peacehaven Wild Kids."

THE BRASS – "Desperation" EP (Sydney Town): From OXBLLOD, BATTLE CRY, and the TEMPLARS to the new breed sounds of OFFENSIVE WEAPON and COMBATE 49, few things are better than Oi! from New York City. With their first proper EP, the BRASS makes a solid dent in the history of skinhead music coming out of the Empire State. The record kicks off with the title track; a moody crawler that opens up to a full throttle skinhead work-a-day anthem. Read these fine lines: *"Every time I turn around you're breathing down my neck / Every time I step outta line you put me back in check / Every time I ask for a little more you throw me on the street / But not this time I'm walking out I'm landing on my feet!"* Add in a haunting guitar tone and you got one of the best Oi! tunes of 2016 so far. The A-Side finishes off with a song that showed up on their 2015 demo, *Rugged Cross*, "American Ghetto." Side-B delivers "Solid Ground" and "Unite and Conquer." This EP is the sound of the daily grind. Let's end this review with a couple lines from "American Ghetto": *"Now I know it's all a joke, there's no point in having hope for a future that only wants us dead."* If you get up every day and walk the walk, this EP is for you.

LIVE BY THE SWORD – "L.B.T.S. / Old Soldiers" (Rebellion): Containing members from RAZORBLADE, SUBROCKERS, STRONGARM AND THE BULLIES, and a few other bands, I was expecting LIVE BY THE SWORD to sound like Danzig singing for HATEBREED. How wrong I was. Surprisingly, this Dutch/American friendship project sounds closer to Aussie Oi!/metal from the '90s (mostly played by bands I can't cite in these pristine pages). If that shrouded reference leaves you baffled, BATTLE RUINS did the same thing a few years ago. "L.B.T.S." is a song about being tuff. Nothing fancy, just a killer rock'n'oi track with allegorical lyrics relating to times past: *"We fought and they died / In bitter years we're raised / To live by the sword / And not, not to fear the endless night!"* The flip, "Old Soldiers," has some great jangly guitars that made me think of the TEMPLARS on *The Return Of Jacques De Molay*. "Old Soldiers" also includes some great simple lyrics: *"Living your life / In a world of shit / On the run / Cause you don't fit!"* It should also be noted that this lil' baby is pressed on 70 gram vinyl and housed in a fat glossy sleeve with lyrics on the back. Punk is great. Oi! is great. Get this and become great.

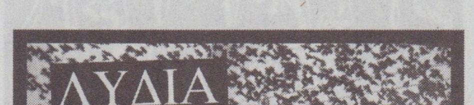
And we're done! Next month we got a four-way split for fans of Francophone, some shit from Russia that may or may not be good, the return of JENNY WOO (Oh, boy…), and some new sikk shit from Philly. And anything else we get in the mail between now and then! Goodnight all sides!

ENDNOTES:

1) Send all recipes and hair tips to: americanbootgang@gmail.com.

2) You can see a picture of me looking cross-eyed kissing a cat on the Gangs Twitter: @ TurboAndGang

3) The Gang and I are trying to get on the new Vice TV channel, VICELAND. We got an idea for a show: It'll just follow me around dressed in full skinhead uniform doing mundane shit. Episodes will include: Skinhead shopping at Aldi, Skinhead takes 40 minutes to get dressed, Skinhead at the main branch of the library, Skinhead eating a "Gotta Have It" size cup of "All Lovin No Oven" at Coldstone. I know I'll watch. $$$.



"Striving for relevance one cigarette butt at a time": On the road with Diät

It's ~~11 pm~~, ~~1 am~~, 3 am on a Saturday and I'm over-caffeinated at my old desk in my old apartment in Athens. I haven't left the house in five days. I've not been in one city for more than three weeks in the last four months, so it's not too bad, really. I'm jamming the Diät record for the first time in a couple months—and definitely the first time since we got back from tour three weeks ago. Roadie's first tour! As soon as the needle drops, it all rushes back; fish-eyed frames and colourful medleys, flashing lights and sonic ecstasy. *I keep myself afloat on a melody*, the record still sounding fucking incredible, even if somewhat bittersweet now. Despite the pessimistic sound and ironic title, the music gives me such positive energy I get teary eyed with emotion. Like I did almost every one of the nine times I saw them live. And I still look forward to the tenth next week in Berlin. I took notes on my phone, drunk in the back of the van, one eye closed as I focused my vision long enough to type, but looking back it all seems like a dream underwater.

I joined them in Brighton—a flight, train ride, and world away. Diät had already been on the road for a few days, with Louis from Good Throb driving Ricky's van. As I'm landing, I know London's ES are ending their set, and by the time I get on the train at Gatwick airport, Diät have started theirs. I'm finally walking down Trafalgar St., and I spot a smiling young man walking up the hill carrying the Diät LP—getting warmer by the minute! Outside the Cowley Club, I jump with joy as I find Iffi, Nordberg, Freak, Toby, and even some other friendly faces from other far off places! (Hi Maria, Mackenzie, Jaume!) The bands finish cleaning up and we pile into Andy's above the Hope and Ruin pub with a 24-pack of Red Stripes, jammin' mixtapes with sick Aussie punk until the wee hours. We wake up to a warm and sunny day, make Neutron Sandies, smoke up the kitchen by mistake, grab the gear and charge the van, then walk around the Lanes for a spot of record shopping and a bite to eat. We say our goodbyes to our lovely host Andy and it's off to Brum! My first time in every city from now until London.

Birmingham is the largest district in England, didn't you know, and the local punks tell me metal is more popular here, and understandably so. The show has an interesting crowd, from trench coats and monocles to teen metalheads and dads with their sons. A swanky (for punks) backstage at the Hare & Hound with couches, hot food, a mini fridge stocked with beer, even a shower and a cheese plate! Diät are drenched in smoke and blue light and the quieter moments with bass and keyboard sound booming! After the show, we hang around outside for a while chatting to the locals, and our hostess Kali introduces us to Nick B…from Napalm Death! Who then proceeds to blow our minds with stories from back in the day! Brum was rough! We all head back to Kali's, beer in tow, while Nick and Nordy DJ on YouTube and more crazy stories unfold. Every now and then, Iffi rises from his sleep waving his beer can in encouragement—"I fucking love Wretched!"

Glasgow is next, and I'm excited to be there! It's a rather dark city, but there's a certain vibe to it that I liked right away, and the architecture is striking. From gothic churches so old the stone had turned black from the rain, right next to ultra-modern minimalist towers made of steel and glass. We check out Monorail Records, where Michael from Night School Records works. Loads of electronic, experimental stuff, and I couldn't resist the new *So Low* compilation with acts like Chris & Cosey, Throbbing Gristle, John Bender, Tuxedomoon, Siglo XX, Front 242, and more. The show is at the Nice N Sleazy club and Michael has cooked us food, is running the door, and will later play a killer set with his new hardcore band Anxiety. He sings into two microphones and the spooky reverb nicely contrasts his erratic stage energy. A great show with lots of friendly people, loads of beer, and massive pakoras and cheesy chips'n'curry sauce afterwards! Michael's house has a dreamy view of Glasgow and we drink wine sprawled out on his living room floor spinning Bill Withers. A beautiful night for an eclipse.

It starts to rain heavily on the way to Cardiff. Our windscreen wiper on the passenger's side is busted and visibility is critical. We're stopped on the side of the highway, massive freight trucks whooshing past us, spraying us with rainwater. Josh and Louis check the situation while Toby keeps Iffi calm with cigarettes and humour. The replacement from the gas station a few miles away (the last one on the shelf!) doesn't match, but Nordy convinces them to give us a refund. Josh and I MacGyver it with a piece of cloth and a hairband and pile back into the van. There's traffic to Cardiff (say that twenty times), but the crappy cappuccino kicks in and Cleaners from Venus keep us company.

The Cardiff show fills up quickly and Chain of Flowers are just great! I'm blown away by how tight their sound is. A blend of shoegaze-y post-punk with powerful pop hooks and hella catchy vocals and songs that make for an all killer no filler record, out now on Alter Stock. It was nice chatting to them and the boys from Disjoy, who opened the show and play stripped down, gloomy post-punk. Lots of friendly people at the distro and I even manage to get Welly from *Artcore* zine a note back via his son who was at the show! After that it was late-night roadside burgers and no sleep 'til London! The band falls asleep pretty fast while Louis and I fall down a "what we used to listen to when we were young" rabbit hole—a generation raised on MTV. I play Babylon Zoo on my phone and we sing along, bumbling across the Severn Bridge and up the M4, past Reading and through the London skyline.

We creep into Bryony's as quietly as we can and practically pass out with exhaustion. The next day is surprisingly sunny and we enjoy *carajillos* and apple tarts with Nani and Carlos in their backyard before the show. It was great to be back at DIY Space for London, and the line up was just killer: London's Sarcasm and Retrofuture, Chain of Flowers, the almighty Good Throb, and, with massive shadows cast behind them on the wall and an enthusiastic crowd of friendly faces up front, Diät. All bands were smashing, and I danced and pogoed like a teenager high on sugar. Good Throb were a revelation on record but even more so live. It was my first (and probably last) time seeing them and I cannot stress how fucking rad it was—it's like the best of early UK punk distilled into one band. The strings are agitated, the drums minimal yet crashing, and the vocals make Sid Vicious sound like a phony. I love being in London—so many lovely people doing inspiring projects, so much excitement and good energy on and off stage. The night went by in a flash and I felt like Cinderella as we charged the van before midnight and headed to Bianca's for a post-punk house after-party. Hungover and coming down the next day, we head for the greasy spoon across the street ("Extra beans! A whole plate of beans!"), say our weepy goodbyes to Louis, and quietly drive through rain and London skyscrapers on our way up north. Next and final UK stop, Sheffield!

The show is sold out, more people than London, and I'm having a smoke and catching up with Fids from Dry Heaves outside the Broomhall community centre. I met Dry Heaves last spring when they came through SF and we had a wicked time. I never really thought I would see them all again, yet here I am, in "God's country," as Ross put it, enjoying the thick accent and bubbly humour, picking their brains about the local scene. It's bloody cold, but inside the people are warm and smiley. People sing along to the bands and dance up front and wave their beers in the air. Locals 99 Watts and Sievehead are great, and seeing Chain of Flowers again—who ease into their set by way of the "Goodbye Horses" riff—is a total delight. Singer Joshua reminds me of Ian Curtis on stage and, while the record is stunning, the live performance is a different experience altogether—more post than pop, loud and completely soul-crushing…ugh… Eagulls from Leeds are headlining, who are apparently a rather big deal, and I can see why—they're like a modern day Cure; it's hard to resist. After mopping the floor and charging the van, I *rrrreally* wanted to party at the infamous Lughole with all the lovely Sheffield lads, but sadly we had an extra early start the next day for Antwerp. The local punk scene in Sheffield is booming right now, with a solid crew of bands and people, like Sievehead, 99 Watts, Dry Heaves, Detergents, Skiplickers, Stalled Minds, and more! Look up Kids of the Lughole on bandcamp for some tunes and the Lughole FB page for loads of upcoming kick-ass gigs! I promise to come back and hang hard one day soon!

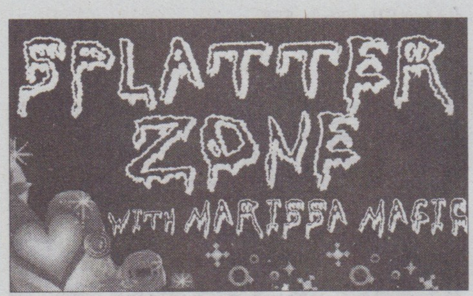
Perhaps I tempted fate by thinking how lucky I am to be on the road for the first time with one of my favorite bands, 'cause it feels like shit kinda boomeranged in our face—metaphorically speaking. Traffic on the highway is a nightmare, it just started to *hail*, the Chunnel is leaving in under an hour and we're still miles away. We keep the spirit cheerful by burning through our last megabytes on stand up comedy videos on YouTube. Deez nuts wanna be off the A2 and in mainland Europe! We make it just in the nick of time, thankfully *don't* get searched at passport control, and in under 45 minutes my phone is getting automated text messages welcoming me to France. A short while later I'm picking up Belgian waffles at a gas station and off to Antwerp we go. As we get closer to the venue, Toby notices that the clutch doesn't kick back like it should. Not ten minutes later—and a mere 200 metres from the venue—we have to pull over. I can see a rain cloud heading our way. Three minutes later, it's pouring. While Iffi and Josh walk to the venue in search of help, we manage to get our host Anneke on the phone and she arranges for a car to come pick some of us up (Thanks, Bram!). The rest of us ride with the tow-truck to the venue where we discharge the van and come to a stark realization: it's Easter Sunday today and tomorrow is Easter Monday and nothing is open—garage included—until Tuesday. Blimey… We're all a bit worried, as we're not sure how we're gonna get all the gear back to Berlin if the van can't be fixed in time. Either way, the show is a success and, even though the crowd seems a bit stiffer to me compared to the UK folk, the local punks are very friendly, chatty, worldly, and welcoming. By cosmic coincidence I even find *MRR* columnist Julien, who does our Instruments 101 column! We'd been in touch for a while now, and meeting in the flesh was a treat! I enjoyed hanging out with Anneke, Rikki, Bram, Martha, and a bunch of other nice punks and, despite my extreme intoxication, I recall the good conversation. And the poppers and dead rats and green speed and almost partying in the wrong house! Check out Martha's band Blackie and the Oohoos on Jezus Factory Records for some dreamy morning-after pop that sounds like a tape unearthed from the '60s, and make sure you buy Anneke a drink when you meet her 'cause she's the best!

The next morning she and I bonded in the avocado aisle, discussing our experiences as women in punk and vowing to never let the clueless patriarchy get us down. "I'm in it for the kicks, not the dicks" she says and we high five in the street *as I drown in unforgiving daylight*. We made a massive breakfast for everyone and tried to figure out how to get back to Berlin.

We made the best of the whole delay and Anneke showed us around the old town, where we did some beer shopping (the record shops were all closed, much to Iffi's disappointment) and had Belgian Trappist beer across from the rather imposing Cathedral of Our Lady. It was windy but sunny and the light marked curved shadows across the stone building facades. I took pictures of doorways and we got fried chips with a myriad different sauces—apparently a thing in Belgium. The night ended with downtime at Anneke's, and David Attenborough taking us through caves and deserts on a *Planet Earth* documentary. Thankfully we managed to rent another, smaller van through the insurance company, because Ricky's van was stuck there for a week or more! We stash the unnecessaries at Anneke's and jam pack the Combi to the ceiling! If all goes well, in seven hours we should be in the B-hole! Echo and the Bunnymen soundtrack the way as I drift in and out of sleep and the conversation. I'm feeling a bit lost and low, but know it's just the post-ecstasy blues. Tired but wired, we reach Tommy Haus where Diät are playing the next night and discharge the van. A quick U-Bahn ride and a bottle of wine later, I'm smoking on Iffi's balcony, trying to collect my thoughts. We jam the Chain of Flowers record (again!) and I get all teary as I say thank you and wish him a goodnight and head to bed.

…to be continued

lydia@maximumrocknroll.com



Technically I'm working in a library, but it's more like a hang out/study spot. I mean, there's a ping-pong table next to the stacks. The library is specialized—I'm not sure yet if I give a shit about the subject, but it's only been a month. I don't quite consider myself a luddite, but I've pushed back for years against my family's attempts to get me an electronic book reader. I don't think I'm better than anyone, I'm just personally stuck on the romance of actual physical books. I'm reshelving or shelf reading, things I'm supposed to delegate to student workers, but this is the shit I love. The specialization of the library involves math and engineering and the subject matter is complex and dense and way above my head. I wanna grasp it because it's all the details and complexities contained within shit we never think about. (This kind of gives my position away) there is an entire division of study devoted to asphalt, and if you start to think about it, it makes sense that there is an entire division devoted to the study of asphalt. How does the wear and tear differ in different places? What are the best compositions of asphalt to withstand this wear and tear? They take G.D. cores of asphalt and study it, like the same shit different scientists do to glaciers.

It's eight in the morning and I'm in search of a book on the city planning of Alameda from 1960 that is lost in the stacks. Somehow the shuffling of books, the dust of relics, the crumbling and preservation of a collection teetering on a memory hole always leaves me bursting with ideas. My mind crackles with all of these other things: a painting to paint, a riff thought to mumble onto my own voicemail hoping no one hears, pause to jot down a wingnut idea about a soul telephone, a total flow of new shit ideas to create and then force onto my adoring fans (at least three people). I like it (this job), it's pretty great within the realms of jobs, but I have to spend too much time here, or I'm a brat or a person with so many other things to do that having to be somewhere 40 hours a week is a little bit of a drag. I'm a boss again, which always seems bizarre. I have no interest really in having power over anyone in this sense. Whenever they do something they're not supposed to, I find myself leveling with them.

"I don't want to have this conversation, you don't want to have this conversation, so could you just knock it off?"

It's a whatever enough environment that listening to music at the circulation desk is fine. There is even a chintzy little speaker that works with the blue tooth. Mostly I leave it up to the students to DJ. I think my tastes would really bum them out. Their taste, however, boggles my mind. Occasionally I can identify a song, but for the most part it all sounds like men softly but upbeat singing the most romantic and smooth parts of Sarah Mclachlan songs. It sounds like something between adult contemporary and music played in mall stores that sell hemp clothing and pre-torn jeans (maybe this is the same genre?). Some songs I refer to in my head as "romance rap" and others are unending flows of Coldplay and Coldplay-like products. I spend hours wincing and feeling baffled by their tastes. This kid is like eighteen and they're listening to the least (or most?) offensive blandness ever. I wonder if other people can hear the music that they think I dig it. I realize that maybe their choices are based on what is library appropriate music. I think about taking over the speaker before they can, but I'd rather attempt to go unnoticed and avoid presenting any kind of conversation starter. At most jobs I try to keep a costume of normal, but no matter what I'm still consistently pinned as a "music person." Coworkers then *looove* to tell me about their favorite bands. Maybe this is arrogant, but I always feel like they're seeking my approval, me the freak in a cardigan with a rip in it and wig askew and I never engage with anyone and they want me to be impressed by how many times they've seen Dave Matthews. I avoid expressing any opinion—I don't want to shit on something that brings them joy, but why me?

Boohoo.

I send the students off to work somewhere else and I listen to *Marquee Moon* at minimal volume. I come in before anyone is here and listen to the Wipers. Like I said, this job is cool in the realms of jobs, but I do miss the period of time at an old job where my lot in life was to file shit in an attic by myself dancing to soul music eight hours a day.

But enough shop talk.

Mozart had to pull out of our Northwest tour with Violence Creeps due to injury, but I had an appointment to be in Olympia anyway, so I caught a ride up with Violence Creeps. I packed a stack of zines and not enough underwear.

Sacramento. During a frisbee sesh, I managed to toss it over a fence twice and get beaned in the neck once. The show was in a basement and the guy running it looked like my brother-in-law and bragged about the time Citizen Fish played there. The attendees seemed like an even mix of spikey and non-spikey punks. It was St. Patrick's Day, but somehow in the haven of the basement nobody would know. I started a pattern here of tagging NOZART at all the venues for the rest of the tour. Apparently at the end of the night I stole the couch away from Max and passed out after wolfing some hippie snacks, but I'm not sure.

Up to Portland, skipping the hippie gas station, stopping at a tourist trap for overpriced shitty coffee, taking a shit in a fast food establishment. In Portland, I walked around the block a few times and got back in time to catch Sloppy Kisses, who despite the unfortunate name were pretty good, playing pretty whatever punk but the singer pushed it into territory somewhere between Blondie and Pink Section. I've been away from the Northwest for long enough and aged out of youth far enough that not really knowing anyone at a show is not weird, but I still feel at home in that region. It's always nice to be back.

Seattle never came together, so the show was a last minute jump on at a depressing bar where they said I had to pay to get in because the band I was with "wasn't headlining or anything." A metal band in the style of Iron Maiden lead by a man with glorious hair whipping around, glistening in the stage lights, playing for an hour plus. An inept hair metal band from Australia that did a pathetic cover of Ace of Spades. Last band of a painfully long night: a band that was maybe kind of metal but possibly a little rockabilly and a fiddle with dreads. The kind of show you spend three hours at after you played wondering if you should just cut out and eat the twenty bucks you maybe could have been paid, end the misery already.

In Olympia it was the Gag homecoming show and packed to the gills. Naomi Punk unexpectedly blew my mind (I really don't dig their recordings) with a woozy repetition of herk jerk and vocals that don't quite know how to sing. Sadly (for me), Gag has ditched the delay on the vocals (which I'm a real sucker for), rendering them into a pretty whatever hardcore band (who still maintain a really amazing overall aesthetic). Once Greg Harvester was telling me about going to a hardcore show, saying "I paid to stand in a room and have men yell at me," and I felt this.

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stitches
inmy
head
fanzine
@gmail
.com

I work nights during the week, which means if there's a show that I want to go to, I'm missing out. It's just the way it is. I saw the flyer for the MOMMY show happening at Faith/Void in Toronto a few times, each time feeling a little more disappointed, even considering the possibility of looking for a day job so I can make it to more shows in this city I've just recently moved to, and within that maybe try and get to know a few more people, too.

It's the day before the show and I get a message from my friend Dom. Dom plays in SAVAGEHEADS from Boston but recently moved to Brooklyn and started a little sign making business that is steadily gaining momentum. I saw his drawings late last year when SAVAGEHEADS toured through Cleveland and then Toronto for Not Dead Yet with RIXE. I got wasted in Cleveland and punished the guy with drunken banter then didn't even remember who he was when I saw him in Toronto. After seeing his drawings then, I asked him if he'd do the cover of the next issue of *Stitches In My Head*, which I finished just a week prior to this show. Anyway, Dom hits me up and says he's travelling with MOMMY on this short Canadian weekend stint, and asks if I'm going to be at the show. I had a package of fanzines I was going to send him and I really wanted to go to this show, so I got the last three hours of my shift covered, put some whiskey in my travel mug, and battled the cold, making my way over to Faith/Void.

Maybe you've heard a little about Faith/Void already, a record store opened just six months ago by Ryan who fronts local hardcore blasters S.H.I.T. Its opening coincided with the end of short lived SHIBGB's, and since this space started booking shows as of January 1st this year, it is quickly filling up with gigs catering to all ages two to three times a week. Apart from the show space at the back of the store, the front is full of mostly contemporary punk records associated with the *MRR* and related punk scenes, fanzines, leather, and second hand t-shirts, all at great prices. There's no online store for the shop, but if you're passing through town for a show or whatever else, make sure you go and take a look and buy something to support this venture and labour of love.

Back to the show. The CHUDS from Ottawa were on first. I missed them. From up the back of the room, I caught PROM NITE, who I've seen before and really dig. In fact, I think I wrote about them in my last column. GAUCHO was launching their 7" and played as last of the locals. Not sure what the future of that band is because I was talking to one of the guys who said he would be moving to Australia soon. Better you than me, mate! Touring act MOMMY hit the stage ("stage") last. I watched from the side while in line for the loo. They've been around about a year, heavy hardcore punk, the singer was super weird and also really coked up. I saw Dom at the merch table when I first walked in and we chit-chatted about life and what we're up to and all that baloney. I scabbed a bunch of ciggies off him (until he started getting frustrated. Sorry, Dom), met some new people, and did some more of that chit-chat stuff you do when in social situations.

There was a point I had no one to talk to and had just come inside, finishing a smoke outside in the cold under the stairs. I sat down on one of the couches in the record store and start flicking through some old *MRRs* from around five years ago. It's a little nostalgic trip down memory lane, seeing who used to write columns or what bands were cool then or what releases had just come out and been reviewed. Sitting there, I realised that it's probably one of my favourite things—going to a show, being surrounded by people into the same music as myself, but sitting on the couches and chatting or reading while the show and everything else is going on in the background.

Because as much as I like to lie to myself and say I'm into punk 100% for the music, and as much as I do love the music, punk wouldn't be half as good if it wasn't for my friends. There's a record blasting on the turntable. The lighting sets a relaxing mood like you're at home in your room just spinning records after a long day. There's a bunch of people hanging out and more records than I'm ever going to own while I'm not permanently living somewhere (maybe in the future) that I can look through during the bands. Or I can just sit here and read and be surrounded in an environment that, y'know, kinda makes me happy. Ryan's got a good set up going with Faith/Void.

I don't buy *MRRs* often. Honestly, for someone that likes to write, I'm really shit at reading. I want to, but my attention span is dismal, so I never really get far before being overcome with anxiety that I'm not doing anything productive with my day. I go over the reviews, then go to the columns. Writing a zine and a column, I always wanted to keep my writing strictly about the music and punk, although over time I feel like I'm talking more and more about my life. I guess because everything I do in my life is some means to an end, the end which is punk all the time. So for this reason, I didn't really like reading zines where people would introduce it apologizing for it coming out late because of work or life stuff and such excuses along those lines. 'Cos I don't really care, I just want to read about music. In saying that, my favorite column to turn to has always been Logan's before he was finished with it, and all he talks about is his life lived with a large dose of punk in the hard times he went through to the music he got into. But I guess I just put it down to the way he writes is real and the shit he lived through is real and, well, I don't know him that well but deep down no matter what's going on, punk is his schtick and he's not overselling how hardcore his life is, it's just that (or maybe he is. I don't fucking know). Kinda felt the same when I read the Cheatah Chrome autobiography, maybe the John Joseph one, too. And the Patti Smith one. You know when there are biographies or autobiographies that really try to sell the shit out of how messed up or crazy their lives were and that's why they're into punk and their band did so well because their life was so brutal? But in reality, you can read through the lines and it all just sounds conceited and boring? Honestly, I can't think of any examples off the top of my head except for a VELVET UNDERGROUND book I thought was boring, but how many books have been written about the VELVET UNDERGROUND? Anyway.

The show's over and I'm not sure if MOMMY needs a place to stay the night, so I stick around. We hang around for the next few hours while the crowd slowly thins out 'til there's no one left but them, Ryan, and one other dude. The MOMMY guys are all coked up, shooting the shit and not sleeping anytime soon, so Ryan locks them into the shop so they can be up as long as they want and crash out without having to load out the gear. I gotta work in a few hours and walk home around 3 am, glad I took a rare break in my schedule of reclusiveness to go hang out with and meet some new people.

SO LONG, NEURONS
WITH ALEXANDRE SIMON

Just some reviews this month. Working on/thinking of some slightly more elaborated columns for next issues, and translating a long ZONE INFINIE interview for y'all as we speak.

1) NO FORM – Live @ DIY Space For London. Why wasn't I warned? I mean, why don't I have any mates nice enough to send me postcards whenever bands like this pop up? NO FORM is from who-knows-where in England. Earlier this year I spent some time in London. There was a gig at that new DIY space (actually called "DIY Space"…Genius), and some cool bands were playing—PHEROMOANS, PERSPEX FLESH, LOWEST FORM—so I went and, you know, watched the bands, had a few beers, a dozen cigarettes, and the usual awkward discussions. Most of the bands were good except for that melodramatic, crypto-fascist looking Danish duo whose name I gladly forgot. They sounded like a distant thunderstorm with Adolf Hitler barking on top of it. File under 2016.

The PHEROMOANS were as nonchalant as a couple of pints in the early afternoon. Props to them. PERSPEX FLESH and LOWEST FORM were like the Laurel & Hardy of brutal, with some wild pit action during the latter. But to me, the band of the night contest started and ended during the NO FORM set. Appropriate name—a total mess. Now that the ISIS fuckers have given a new dimension to the "violent gig" concept and put even GISM to shame, I hafta say the antagonistic frontman gimmick has kinda gotten old, but here it didn't detract from the performance. These guys were torturing their instruments, jumping like madmen in front of the not-so-receptive audience. I hope I'm not the only one who felt like an ass for not joining them in tearing the place down. The music was slow, hypnotic, dark, noisy hardcore with a trumpet filtered thru some fucked up pedal. Like a punker BUTTHOLE SURFERS or a less arty DAWN OF HUMANS, maybe. They've also got a great LP out on Muscle Horse.

2) FAUX DÉPART – Demotape. The polar opposite of NO FORM? FAUX DÉPART is a new band from Lyon playing an updated version of this city's brand of melodic French punk. I picture them in a continuum of local bands you probably haven't heard—LEXOMYL, TÉLÉCOMMANDE, PIZZA OD, PARANORMAL, DÉFAITE…The sound of this city, baby. I've heard people compare them to LES SHERIFF, too? Fun punk rock by people who dig both PÉRIPHÉRIQUE EST and mid-era NOFX, with a clean recording and tons of hooks. For what it's worth, I'd say they're at their best when they're at their worst, like with the yéyé-sounding hit "Artichaut," which I didn't like on first listen and ended up whistling in the streets all day long. (fauxdepart.noblogs.org)

3) SHOES THIS HIGH – self-titled 7". I wouldn't have paid attention to this band if it wasn't for the latest issue of the *Nuts!* newspaper. You should pick it up, BTW. It's got a great MOMMY interview about doing time in mental asylums, a hilarious article by Aaron Cometbus about '80s hardcore business cards (?!), and a cool color poster stating "Up is down. The Earth is round. Think about it." I tried, but my brain was gonna burst. There's an Emmy Ramone article in which they describe this New Zealand band as "a middle ground between the art punk and avant-garde music bands like Kleenex, Pink Section, Pere Ubu, and the raging and very punk acts like Jesus & the Gospelfuckerz and Cheetah Chrome Motherfuckerz." When I read this I jumped on the computer, and while I'm not hearing much 'FUCKERZ here, this is indeed a great art punk/post-punk record in the vein of *Messthetics*/the FALL, with a tiny guitar sound, groovy bass, and an alienated/degenerated feel all the way. Reissued by Siltbreeze in 2014, together with a killer live album called *Straight To Hell*.

4) TOMMY T & THE CLASSICAL MISHAPS – self-titled 7". Cool Death from Australia is a very reliable label, and this might be their best release yet, together with the GUTTER GODS LP. If there's one band from the Dangerhouse era that hasn't been referenced to death in regards to modern sounds, it's BLACK RANDY & THE METROSQUAD, and that's the one band I can think of here. Not that the two are perfect twins or anything, TOMMY T being less funky and all, but I hear the spiritual connection. Groovy, synth-driven, danceable, yet punk as a brick thrown at a computer screen, this is music not noise, sure, but it's also a unique acid mutant ride and would nicely fit on a mixtape sandwiched between, say, one of these SCREAMERS sets and the DAVE E & THE COOL MARRIAGE COUNSELLORS bootleg. (Feel It Records has it in the US.)

5) TRAITRE – live + new records. I didn't think any "traditional" French punk record was gonna top the ZONE INFINIE LP in a while, but it already happened. I was kinda late in paying attention to TRAITRE, but I've seen them three times in the past few months, and every time was better than the last. I've heard they're calling it quits, which is a shame as their two new records (a 7" on Build Me a Bomb and a 12" on LADA) include anthems after anthems of what some people call Oi! but that I'd rather call melancholic, combative dark punk. Regardless, songs like "J'm'emmerde" or "Humain en vue" are gonna become classics once people catch up. Plus, unlike most Oi! bands, TRAITRE seem to clearly lean on the autonomous / squat / radical anarchist side of the political spectrum, so don't expect them to wave the French flag or sing about soccer and beer anytime soon. They've already got too much to say about death, suicide, misanthropy, and urban boredom. (Free download at giveusachance.free.fr/traitre.htm)

6) ROBOTNICKA – live @ La Gueule Noire. Originally from Dijon (France), this band has been active since 1998. While I'm sure they've got their fan base both in and out of France, I feel like maybe most *MRR* readers aren't aware of them? Yet they've toured the US two or three times. Musically, they're one of a kind, somewhere between a punker LIO (they even cover her hit, "Banana Split") a pop version of MELT BANANA, and a female-fronted TAULARD on speed, but even weirder and wilder than that combination may suggest. ROBOTNICKA is a party band, that's for sure—the kind that will make you smile, dance, *and* scratch your head at the same time, with some synth effects straight outta some B-grade space opera, crazy outfits, and a live performance that owes as much to early LA punk as it does to theater or some children's carnival. When you read this, they'll be back from their first Japanese tour. (robotnicka.bandcamp.com)

7) BEATNIKS – live demo tape. At first there was the lonely LIFE STINKS, San Francisco's only punk band. Then they were joined by the WORLD, and now by BEATNIKS, a new band with a great name and great demo of downer rock'n'roll/proto-punk for fans of Charles Manson (the cult leader, not the musician), Fang, and hand-rolled cigarettes. Something like a rawer, more upbeat, garage-y and straightforward version of LIFE STINKS with less embellishment and no saxophone but the same kinda disgusted crooner vocals and desperate urban feel. I've played this thing all day long and I don't see myself getting tired anytime soon. From my distorted outsider perspective, it seems like these guys and the two aforementioned bands are kinda forming a scene of their own in the SF Area, and they kinda make me want to visit this yuppie heaven again. This is a demo and recorded on the cheap, so I bet the record is gonna destroy if it ever happens.

ENDNOTE:
My mate Vinnie and I have just started a tape / zine label called Cool Marriage. We've already released some comp tapes of singles by GOOD THROB and MYSTIC INANE, plus the first issue of a zine called *Psycho Disco*. It's in French and covers everything from SACCHARINE TRUST to ALICE COLTRANE, POISON IDEA, ROBERT CRUMB, and '70s Japanese girl pop groups, etc. More projects on the way. Find us at coolmarriage.bigcartel.com

VIKTOR
VARGYAI
AWKWARD
RAGING

The A-Side of the first Stooges record is super trippy, it's such a shame that the punk scene hasn't got further than the second song in ripping them of.

The D-beat band I play bass for were asked to audition for the local *X-Factor* by some recruiting assistant for the show. If you don't have to Google what it is then you are a poser and should stop reading this magazine. We replied as we always do when an awkward request lands in our mailbox: "One of us has committed suicide we will not play for the upcoming weeks."

Favorite currently reissued Croatian bands: Solunski Front. A-Side of their record sounds like if Saccharine Trust never tried to outdo themselves by sinking into school jazz mud but continued to create manic sounds. B-Side is more hectic, dizzy guitar abusing, urgent hardcore. All over, this record is an amazing documentary of forgotten greatness.

The other Yugo love of mine is Distress, who perfectly combine their gloomy echo guitars with D-beat rage without being pretentious. Dark sounds here express personal sadness and the pace is pure devastation.

Seems like everybody who was unsuccessful in anything will find their fame in techno. I don't meet success by maintaining a playlist with something new, something old, something POC, something all-girl, something non-American, something local, something American, and I am also unable to express my thoughts relating to the desired but unknown bands, so I too listen to techno.

If I wasn't over deadline, I would describe all the sounds I have heard lately in nebulous ramblings but now I only have time to make a batch of sentences and this time you have to take the shrooms and have the visions instead of me.

I recently came back from a tour that was cancelled halfway through due to the van's engine blowing up. Being stuck in a small western European city where there's nothing to do but consume drugs is not a very uplifting experience. After all, it's good to play shows. That's better than doing shrooms in a basement of a squat.

Daily activities these days: Watching TV and feeling like shit. Making punk plans, meeting punk productivity. No future AKA mature tears are falling on the grave of childhood enthusiasm.

Ideas for current band names: Whatever SS, Anything SS.

This reissue hype is cool, but I'm still a few months away from turning 30 and I want to hear current bands instead. Also, please stop putting out LPs for fifteen whatever currency that I paid $60 for a year ago. Or give me my money back. Or release them in advance of me scoring original presses.

RWA from France, with their brilliant fuckwave, are winning the best music with the worst album cover award. In an another issue I will discuss great album art with bad music in the digital age.

That second Blitz album.

I saw Doom and they were great. I failed at my initial plan of sneaking into their backstage drunk and punishing them for hours with the joke of naming themselves after a famous RPG game.

The D-beat band I play bass for plays shows this year with Doom, Mob 47 and Extreme Noise Terror, Crude SS. This sentence would be a lot more exciting if it wasn't written in 2016.

When I meet old musicians from legendary bands that I don't know what their music sounds like or what impact it had on which crowd, then mostly they just seem like sad old people.

Experiences with expanding a record collection: It's mostly about money, inner jokes, and empty space issues.

Top bedroom noise right now is Manisch Depressiv from Switzerland: Bored girls attaching together noise collages without drums with non-stop guitar and monomaniac chanting. Flipping the 7" back and forth would make the whole experience even more challenging and fun.

I got an issue of *Cretins Of Distortion*. It is indeed a good read, but I'm a bit suspicious whether everything from Cleveland was really that great. I also dig how bad binding is and with reading it enough the magazine will just tear itself apart. Very another level art.

It's not always easy to pretend every month that you have anything to say about punk in general. The egoistic obsession that makes me want to do it even though the previously mentioned obstacle is just making it even worse.

The Japanese Sodom is way better than the German one. Huge surprise for those who rather like amazing minimalist hardcore punk instead of west European beer thrash.

I'm getting more obsessed with Firmeza 10. If art is in the breaks, in the absolute void, in what is consciously left out, then their primitivism is some high-concept form of human culture. After a point, this is the only way that makes sense to play music when it makes its listeners do their work as well not just nod their skulls to digestible tunes. I have read that music is intelligent noise. Fuck that and all hail primitivism.

Top Eight: Gypsy SS – *Demos*, Ikkashinju – *Slow Down*, Barn Av Regnbuen – *Det E'kje Nåkka Artig Længer*, Violeta Vil – *Mujeres Ulaga*, Zerstörte Jugend – self-titled, Barcelona – *Pueden Ser Ellos*, V/A – *A Gnomean Haigonaimean*, Gun Outfit – *Two Way Player*

futures and pasts
*erika elizabeth

Independent radio rules, y'all. I spent my teenage years growing up in Houston obsessed with the Rice University radio station, and I'd stay up all night to record as many programs as I could onto stacks of blank cassettes while I meticulously transcribed the setlists into spiral notebooks. A bunch of college kids introducing a young teenage me to bands like MISSION OF BURMA via the airwaves at 3 am was more or less what got me through high school, and it's safe to say that I probably wouldn't have a fraction of my current music knowledge (and probably wouldn't even be writing this column) if it hadn't been for those freaks and weirdos in the KTRU studios in the late '90s/early '00s. After I moved to Western Massachusetts for college, I got to spend the next eight years living out my one and only life goal up to that point, which was to be a college radio DJ. For the two hours a week that I would spend playing records and talking into a microphone from a dungeon-like campus basement, I was able to connect with all sorts of people who were just as obsessed with flipped-out shit as I was—the staff at the local liquor store who always wanted to hear DEVO deep cuts, the dad who excitedly told me about taking his thirteen-year-old daughter to see GRASS WIDOW, the guy who called in to tip me off to Amherst's late '70s DIY post-punk geniuses the SCIENTIFIC AMERICANS, etc.

Since moving to Portland a few years ago, I've been doing a podcast in an attempt to fill the void left by giving up my radio show, and while that sort of online platform is able to still facilitate those interpersonal connections via the occasional email or record sent off to me from a complete stranger, it's never felt fully "real" to me in the same way that terrestrial radio beamed out to car stereos and kitchen boomboxes all over my town did. I've spent the past couple of months helping to get a new low-power, non-profit, freeform FM station off the ground here in Portland, and this weekend, we officially launched and the first installment of my two-hour weekly show (I swiped the name *Futures and Pasts* for it, too) was broadcast out into the world. Having the opportunity to be involved with this amazing grassroots effort to bring something unconventional and boundary-pushing to the local media landscape has really made me feel like I'm a part of a meaningful (and incredibly punk) community again. I've spent countless years seeking out that same sense of fulfillment in more "traditionally" punk ways, whether it was trying to start new bands or booking shows or helping to run a DIY venue, but there's always been a part of me that's struggled to feel completely integrated and acknowledged in those spaces.

To bring all of this full circle, my big radio-related project last month was putting together a lecture and accompanying video presentation on the history of post-punk, which I had been asked if I wanted to do as part of the station's series of musicology classes. I'm shy as hell and the thought of talking to a room full of people for an hour about how exactly the CHAMELEONS gave way to INTERPOL was kind of terrifying, but how could I turn down a rare opportunity to share all of this questionably useless information that I carry around in my brain every day? The hardest part was trying to cover 40 or so years of post-punk and its aftershocks in only 60 minutes, and one topic that I really wish I'd been able to dive into in greater detail was the whole subterranean network of ramshackle late '70s/early '80s bands who put their truly weird and fractured art-punk to tape as soon as they had the most rudimentary grasp of their instruments. The INSTANT AUTOMATONS fit that bill perfectly, taking the DESPERATE BICYCLES' "*it was easy, it was cheap, go and do it*" DIY ethos to the extreme by building some of their own instruments and refusing to turn any profit off their lo-fi recordings, making them available free of charge to people who sent them blank tapes in mail. Anyone at all interested in the amateurish, gloriously disjointed post-punk of legends like the HOMOSEXUALS or SWELL MAPS should be required to pick up *Sincerely Making a Noise*, the new LP collecting eighteen INSTANT AUTOMATONS tracks from 1977 to 1982, hand-picked by band member Mark Lancaster from their string of homemade cassettes, compilation appearances, and self-released records. It's a perfect snapshot of the disparate approaches of early UK DIY, from shoestring-budget minimal synth ("Catacomb") to ghostly mutant dub-punk ("Too Big") to off-kilter CLEANERS FROM VENUS-esque bedroom pop ("Milton Keynes") to tape hiss-saturated primitive punk stagger ("Emma"). Worth it alone for the inclusion of the brilliant toy instrument-aided post-punk anti-anthem "People Laugh At Me (Coz I Like Weird Music)." (BFE Records, bferecords.com)

The NICE MEN from London (via Liverpool) were a part of that same early '80s *Messthetics*-inspiring scene, but unlike a lot of their counterparts, they've so far escaped the attention of compilation curators, reissue labels, and post-punk collector scum. I picked up their debut single from 1980 a few weeks ago for a whole two dollars, and not because I had stumbled on any sort of unbelievable score on it, either. I've said it before, and I'll say it again—there really is no telling how many of these sorts of semi-forgotten, under-the-radar records made by Thatcher/Reagan-era art school eccentrics and teenager rabble-rousers exist out there, languishing in the collective discount bins of the world. This one in particular is pretty killer. "Switch It Off" on the B-Side strips the fiery dub/funk-indebted post-punk of GANG OF FOUR or GLAXO BABIES down to its most skeletal parts, leaving two dispassionate, overlapping voices reciting lines about the revolution over some choppy, staccato guitar and a rubbery bass line rumbling underneath. The real reason to fork over a couple of dollars for the single? A-Side "Nuclear Summer" is a flat-out smash of shambling outsider-pop in the vein of fellow UKDIY eccentrics TRONICS with a minimalist framework of frantically strummed acoustic guitar, drums that sound like they were salvaged from a junkyard, and some repetitive synth twitch buried in the mix as the band sings the praises of holidays spent basking in the warm glow of radiation. Warped and wonderful as hell. The NICE MEN put out one more 7" in 1981 that was marked by a turn toward slick New Wave overproduction (including keyboards like whoa) which unfortunately killed the offbeat, inept charm of the first single. One top-notch 7" is all you need to eventually make it onto the endless cycle of post-punk anthologies, though.

Fayetteville, Arkansas' resident psychedelic-damaged garage duo DOCTOR NOD have a brand new tape entitled *Top Tips* collecting their three previous small-run cassette releases in one handy package. These boys really do their thing proper with the sort of hazy hooks, kaleidoscopic guitar jangle, and noisy bursts of fuzz and hiss that sound like they could have just as likely been sourced from some scratchy late 1960s private press 45 single found in a dusty small town thrift store as from some ROKY ERICKSON-worshipping hometaper's basement four-track demos in 2016. If I had to point to some kindred musical spirits, there's elements of those early GUIDED BY VOICES records brimming with skewed lo-fi pop for short attention spans, the lackadaisical modern psych sprawl of SIC ALPS or WHITE FENCE, and the raw two-chord freakbeat of a hundred post-KINKS British Invasion hopefuls who have been propping up the obscurist garage rock compilation industry for the past two or three decades. There's enough spectral, echo-drenched vocals, bashed drums, and molasses-like druggy drawl over the course of these fifteen songs to give you hope that, at least in Arkansas, there's some *Nuggets*-schooled garage disciples fighting the good fight to take the genre back from the Burger Records doofuses of the world. (Clean Nice Quiet, drnod.bandcamp.com)

Quick shout-out to OBJECTS from Chicago who have a new demo featuring five short bursts of no frills, no-fidelity minimalist punk perfectly suited to vocalist Kathleen's too cool for school deadpan delivery. My hit-pick might go to "Rogers Park," which is just over a minute's worth of jagged, falling apart at the seams racket that sounds like a bootleg cassette of the URINALS fronted by Su Tissue at her most detached, with an insistently catchy repeated declaration of "*my shoes are tied / my brain is fried*" that's right up there with SUBURBAN LAWNS' classic couplet "*I'm a janitor / oh my genitals*" in the wacked-out poetry department. You could kind of say that OBJECTS are contemporizing the Dangerhouse-centered late '70s Southern Californian scene in the same way that C.C.T.V. (right over the other side of the Indiana border) are nodding to the mutant Midwestern post-punks of the early '80s. All of the scrappy and snotty attitude of a future *Killed By Death* essential in the making! (objex.bandcamp.com)

Say hey! Analog: Erika Elizabeth / 2545 E. Burnside Street #203 / Portland, OR 97214 / USA, digital: ripitupstartagain@gmail.com, more sights and sounds: futuresandpasts.org

FELIX HAVOC
FIN DE SIECLE ANGST

The last few months we've been talking about the Crossover scene of the mid 1980s This month I want to talk about three bands that are both at the core of the movement and also somewhat of outliers: DISCHARGE, SACRILEGE, and the VARUKERS. First off, let me state that these have been three of my favorite bands since I first heard them. Indeed, my appreciation for these three bands has grown greatly over the years, while many other bands I used to love in the '80s haven't held up as well for me.

DISCHARGE was of course one of the most influential bands of the early hardcore movement. It's really common to read interviews with early '80s bands where they say they started out trying to sound like UK SUBS or the SEX PISTOLS, until they heard DISCHARGE and overnight they changed their sound to a rawer, faster, hardcore vibe. So when DISCHARGE added elements of metal to their sound, it was both a sign of the times and something of an endorsement of an ongoing trend in the direction of music.

As one who lived through it, DISCHARGE's journey into the realm of metal was kind of a trying experience. Around 1983 the metal started creeping into the music, the songs were slower, there were more guitar leads, the vocals a little more drawn out, but the songs were still good, and DISCHARGE was still a highly regarded band. But I can remember a lot of people being dismayed at "Warning" and "Price of Silence" in comparison to the early material. It was common to see someone hold their nose and mockingly sing "*this is the price, price of silence*" in a high-pitched and mocking nasal voice. That said, to me even the "Ignorance/No Compromise" material was pretty good, even if it was far removed from the *Why* era. Then after a few years of silence came *Grave New World*, which despite it's recent ironic revival, was one of the biggest buzzkill records of all time. All that said, was DISCHARGE really a crossover band? I say no. Although they were one of the earliest band to mix metal into the hardcore sound, that sound still seems somewhat distanced from a band like CRUMBSUCKERS or LEEWAY or even *F.O.A.D.* era BROKEN BONES. While they helped lead the trend into the world of metal from the world of hardcore punk, I feel like they failed to hit on the formula that we associate with most Crossover bands, instead being more of a metal/hardcore hybrid than a pure fusion of the two styles.

In a similar fashion, GBH and the EXPLOITED also mixed a fair amount of metal into their music for a bit, but I don't really feel like they went into the Crossover realm with the same zeal as, say DRI, DR. KNOW, or ENGLISH DOGS. Again, they injected some metal into their sound as was the trend, but were riding, rather than driving, that particular bandwagon.

How about the VARUKERS? At some point, two of the VARUKERS either quit or were fired and Rat wound up recruiting two lads from a short lived band called WARWOUND to become the new VARUKERS. The result was the *Another Religion Another War* 12", which saw Damien Thompson on guitar bringing to bear some metal influence but still keeping the band's sound deeply rooted in hardcore punk similar to DISCHARGE and GBH. Damien and Tony, and later Andy, left to form SACRILEGE (more on this band below). I am not sure how much of this material Damien wrote, if any, on the next VARUKERS release, *One Struggle One Fight*, but it headed further into a metal/hardcore territory, which for 1985 was nothing out of the ordinary. I really like this era of the VARUKERS, although the guys in the band have told me they get the best response from their UK82 material and tracks that appeared on comps like *Punk and Disorderly*. Again, this popular UK punk band started playing punk, then moved to a more aggressive hardcore sound, then into some metal influence, but I have a hard time really calling mid '80s VARUKERS material Crossover. In fact, the raw and driving atmosphere is more like the then nascent crusty hardcore scene than a full-blown metal/hardcore crossover band. Like DISCHARGE, the feel is more for hardcore that's taken on some metal influence than a band that has embraced the Crossover movement. To me, this band is also something of an outlier. Fast forward to the present and Damien has put together a new version of WARWOUND with Rat on vocals. This band played here recently with HELLBASTARD and it was great. They did a mix of SACRILEGE songs, WARWOUND demo tracks, and VARUKERS songs from the *One Struggle One Fight* era. I for one had a blast, as these bands are longtime favorites of mine.

Lastly, let's talk about SACRILEGE. As we noted before, Damien left VARUKERS, taking most of the line up with him and recruited Lynda "Tam" Simpson on vocals. This band had a unique and transcendent sound that bridged the worlds of metal, hardcore, and crust. Most people became aware of this band from the comp track "Dig Your Own Grave," which was the stand out track on the *We Won't Be Your Fucking Poor* comp. Most people I know who heard this track were blown away. To my mind, Tam is tied for the best female hardcore vocals with Chitose from the COMES. The mix of her raging vocals with the metallic hardcore riffing was a blast of raw sound assault from the speakers. I saw the band's photo in *MRR's* UK scene report and was super excited to get *Behind the Realms of Madness* when it came out on Pusmort. When this LP came out we played it a *lot*, and there was some debate between the punks and metalheads I hung out with whether this was a hardcore record or a metal record. The metalheads said it was hardcore because it was too raw and rough to be metal. The punks said it was metal because it was too technical and polished to be punk. And this unresolved debate is the crux of the magical qualities of this landmark LP. For me, the first two SACRILEGE LPs dwell in some kind of transcendent reality unifying the best elements of metal, hardcore, and what was to soon emerge as crust. That is to say they had the anger and power and driving riffs of hardcore with the musicianship and structure of metal, *but* they lacked the pomposity and grandstanding and outright goofiness of a lot of metal and crossover acts. *Within the Prophecy* got a bit more of a cheesy metal cover, but the music and atmosphere are the same incredibly killer songs, masterfully arranged, with Tam's searing vocals. The third SACRILEGE LP *Turn Back Trilobite* was not really my cup of tea, but I would note that it foreshadowed some slow doomy metal stuff that would blow up just a few years later and is quite popular to this day.

Finally this month, I was listening to the latest news about the current US elections on the radio, and I wondered to myself what George Orwell would make of all this. I remember in the '80s people talked a lot about Orwell's 1984 as being prophetic of a dystopian future that may or may not have arrived. *MRR* ran a cover in 1984 which quoted Orwell and there was an article with the premise "1984 has arrived and it's user friendly." Indeed, there was a lot of talk in those days of "friendly fascism." The brutal policies of Thatcher and Reagan, which pitted the strong against the weak, the rich against the poor, but were so well marketed as to get the masses of people to buy into them as being for their own good. I would love to crack open a root beer and watch CNN and Fox News with George Orwell and see what he thinks of his nightmare vision. I think he would be impressed at the level and sophistication of the media's ability to control and manipulate information and people. To us, looking back, the propaganda of Hitler and Stalin seems so crude. We wonder, how did people fall for this stuff? But it was that crude propaganda that Orwell was basing his vision of the future on. I think he grasped the nascent power of technology, but would be amazed at its current sophistication and employment. That said, when all of this technology and subtle social control fails, we still see that the underlying pillar of social control is brute force. It doesn't take much to get the riot police out on the streets if the populace decides to move beyond online petitions to actually protesting in the streets. I think Orwell would agree that the more things change, the more they stay the same.

OBITUARY

TIM BEATY

Tim Beaty, mind-blowing drummer and longtime Carbondale punk, died on Sunday, March 26th. As drummer for bands such as the Hateful Dead, the Bourbon Knights, the Conniption Fitts, It Burns, the Dammit Boys, Blast Radius, and, of course, Lick My Butt and Balls, Tim's reputation as a wild man and all around great guy was solidified. His ridiculous 30"+ bass drum and tendency to drum in nothing but briefs and taped nipples also helped secure his local musical legend. As a longtime resident of the Lost Cross house in Carbondale, IL, he helped put on and play literally hundreds of shows in the DIY punk scene in the seventeen or so years he was actively involved.

He's survived by his wife, Jessica, and his five-year-old son, Jake. His son has autism and special needs, so the Tim Beaty Memorial Trust Fund has been established in order to help make sure he can get the services needed. Donations can be made to People's National Bank at 901 W. Broadway, Centralia, IL.

Tim was killed by a stray bullet in his apartment after letting two strangers into his apartment who were avoiding a shooting at a party next door. Tim put them on the ground and shielded them. He was 41.

He was an amazing guy to be in a band

with, tour the country with, work with, and live with. And he died an actual goddamn hero...at 4:20 am. No joke. He would have laughed his ass off knowing that.

RIP, Tim. Roll a fatty on the good couch wherever you are. We'll all miss you and Carbondale will never be the same now that you're gone.

Ray Martinez

OBITUARY

ERICA BOTZ
1984–2016

POLLI
2008–2016

Words cannot describe the ripple of grief that travelled through the West Coast once learning of the passing of Erica Botz and her dog Polli. Over the years in the Southern California and Bay Area punk scenes, Erica helped these communities in their goals of creating inclusive, political, and intentional spaces, projects and music. Playing in the bands Tender Buttons and Sorry Not Sorry, her stage presence and energy demanded a silent connection, a message. You felt you understood what she was trying to say without words; just emotion. She demonstrated that skill on stage and in person. It was intense and euphoric, even frightening at times. In her performance, she brought you to places you refused to confront and had yet to dwell on.

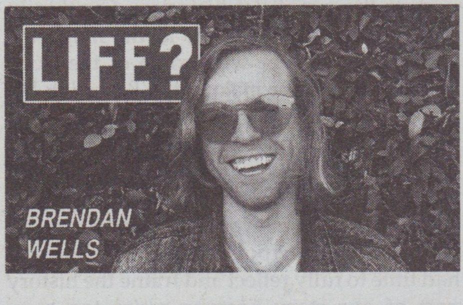
Once at a Sorry Not Sorry show in San Francisco she sang with her back turned to the audience rocking back and forth, singing to a point where I though she was going to turn inside out. In our conversation afterwards, she admitted to peeing her pants a bit; half out of exertion and half out of nervousness. That was the way she was: she would push herself to the limits to be the best possible person she could be in all aspects of herself, developing invaluable connections and touching and inspiring people with genuine honesty and compassion. She gave countless hours of integral work to organizations like the Bay Area Booking Collective—a group that promotes all ages and safer spaces centering marginalized people—Bay Area Girls Rock Camp, *Maximum Rocknroll*, and Think and Die Thinking, a fest held in San Jose that held space to create positive change in punk. She helped build foundations and friendships within those organizations and put what she sang and wrote into practice. The values and goals of those organizations were also her own: centering and empowering women, queer, trans, POC, and non-binary voices, battling systemic oppression, creating a presence in DIY punk, and fostering creative output.

You could see it in how she navigated spaces, approaching people with such a cool gentleness. Reaching out to people, supporting them, and never expecting anything in return. Saying hello to you at events and in public, acknowledging you when you felt the most invisible, letting you know you were just not seen, but *valued*. In her own way, she downplayed and humbled herself. She acknowledged her own adversities and grief, her struggles with mental illness. While the reality of mental health can be heavy and dark at times, it also gave her strength, determination, perseverance, vigilance, and empathy.

Erica was the one who still kept up letters, writing you enlightened and passionate declarations mixed in with everyday life and personal reflection. By her side always was Polli, a rambunctious and sneaky black lab/pit mix who had boundless energy. She made a cake for nearly every one of her friends' birthdays and it was the same every time: vegan chocolate baked in a piano shaped pan, *and we never got sick of it*. There was no difference for her between the affective labor of friendship and the work in the punk scene. There was a reason she referred to her friends as family, because to begin a healing process from the wounds and trauma of whitesupremacistciscapitalistheteropatriarchy, you are going to have to break down the ways in which we've been conditioned to hate each other and ourselves.

Lying on the beach with close friends the day of her funeral, my friend exclaimed to me how Erica was a real life hero. "You see these people living the life you can only dream of, doing the things you've always wanted to do."

Ari Perezdiez with Sean Nieves-Quiñones and Spencer Rangitsch



Today I walked the half block from Amoeba to Golden Gate Park, got offered weed twice in the 30 seconds it takes to make the trip, and drank a kombucha in the warm California sun. Dogs with bandanas and ski goggles around their necks ran free without leashes and pooped wherever they wanted while their owners smoked weed openly. As romantic as it all sounds, I can't help but daydream about the Midwest. It's not hard to keep up with everything, though. Objects came out with an awesome demo and I didn't even have to play a show in Chicago to get passed a tape—someone in Vancouver posted a link for me to see.

Things travel in obtuse ways. Alex Simon is already reviewing the Beatniks demo and it hasn't even made it over to *MRR* from Oakland yet. It'd be tired to harp on how the internet has changed things, but we have the kind of opportunities at the moment where we can hear a demo recorded by a band halfway across the world the same day that they finish mixing it. Do you have to dig a hole and bury your demo in it to ensure it will be a certifiable future KBD unknown banger? As tempting as the ultimate interface meld is, to be connected to everything at once through technology, I need to disconnect from social media for my own mental health. But if its not missing out that I'm preoccupied with, it's the past.

Reading through the awesome Hattiesburg scene report in this month's issue reminded me a lot of the Midwest and booking shows and playing in bands in Iowa City, a place where it felt like we had a handful of golden years in recent history where bands were putting out records and touring out to the coasts regularly. It felt like something punk bands in Iowa have rarely done with the exception of some bands like Ten Grand, though it's so hard to know everything that's happened in a place where things seem to happen in disjointed spurts with little to no documentation or continuation. That sentiment of not knowing the music history of your own town is similar to how Hampton talks about feeling like what they're doing in Hattiesburg hasn't happened there before, though I also hear that sentiment from places like Bloomington, Indiana, where someone like Greg Harvester will set the record straight and let you know that the new wave of young punks don't know they're booking their shows in the same neighborhoods that have had basement punk gigs for decades.

Iowa City and Hattiesburg are two places that aren't that different from other small punk towns: Holyoke in Western Mass, Hammond in Northwest Indiana; more esoteric scenes like Kamloops, BC, or Willimantic, CT; or any other place with a punk thing going on that a small crew of people are working really hard to keep afloat. Some smaller places do just fine and shine brighter than others in punk popularity for one reason or another, like how people will always pay attention to Olympia for the legitimate reason that it has always been exploding with bands despite its size. Olympia's proximity to bigger places like Seattle and Portland has to help, same as how Hattiesburg must be benefitting in a way by being close to New Orleans, which seems to be popping off more than it has in the last few years. It's nothing against the quality of bands, but I always wonder if the Northwest Indiana scene would have gotten hyped as hard if it weren't so close to Chicago.

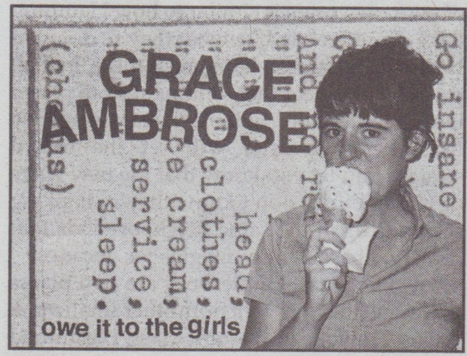
I think there's a similar vibe and mindset to all these spots. I always tied it to the Midwest, but I'm sure it has to happening all over the world. The idea of living in a place without the accoutrements of a bigger scene has to be universal, places where it feels harder to participate in or associate with the bigger DIY scene; places passed over by touring bands because of a grander anonymity in punk history, like Omaha, or for plain geographic inconvenience, like Duluth, MN, or in places in Europe outside of the focus on the major cities. The small scenes that love it when bands make the effort to plan a stop on their tour. I want to get out and meet the rest of the Earth's Midwesterners.

ENDNOTES:

1) First, Uranium Club is doing a short West Coast tour.
May 29 – LA @ E7
May 30 – Frisco @ the Knockout
May 31 – Santa Rosa @ the Funk Den
June 1 – Portland @ the Know
June 2 – Olympia @ New Moon
June 3 – Vancouver @ Black Lab
June 4 – Seattle @ the Nut Hole

2) Then, Uranium Club is gonna go to Europe in November! Get in touch to help me book this tour!

brendan@maximumrocknroll.com



Around the compound recently we've been into list-making. Top five US hardcore bands, your three favorite Ramones songs, the musical output of Nordic Countries in order from best to worst. The first changes every day, the second's a practically impossible question, and what better time to ask the last one than when you're sitting in the same room as 48,000 punk records, ready to be employed on the stereo as evidence of your point?

Top five USHC has been the question we've asked the most people and it has yielded the most interesting set of responses. There was a least one argument about if Big Boys were hardcore or not (we ultimately decided that they transcend genre). We had the same fight about the Dead Kennedys and again about Hüsker Dü. Every list seemed to have one sentimental pick—something tied to hometown or identity—and everyone had at least a few "starter bands" in their group. Turns out they're classics for a reason. Everyone's lists were firmly stuck in the '80s, with a few exceptions.

I went to a talk on Friday, a slideshow presentation by Cynthia Connolly about her work putting together *Banned in DC*, followed by a panel discussion amongst a few DC punks who had been there, done that. I thought about asking for their top five USHC bands to close out the Q&A, but instead I asked "When did punk stop being a part of your daily life?" There was a little bit of stunned silence before they all uttered some iteration of "Never! It's never gone away." It wasn't supposed to be a "gotcha!" question, and I think they missed the point—which was intended to be more about when the mechanics of punk disappeared from their routines. When did the gig stop being the unit they organized their social lives around? Chris Stover (from Void) went on to say something like "The things I learned from punk apply to my life as a real estate agent." What?!

There were a few other holy shit moments throughout—like when the panel members talked about how people "used to" send each other records and tapes in the mail along with personal notes, or when they wondered how people might find out about new punk music these days. I wanted to rip the copy of *Maximum* I had out of my bag and stand on my chair and wave it around. "We're still here, we're still here!"

It's moments like these where the particularities of *MRR* come into focus. We are and have been a hugely important resource, arguably part of shaping most historically significant punk scenes. We're a part of the panelists' histories—Cynthia in particular credits her time at the magazine with providing her with some of the skills and inspiration for making the *Banned In DC* book—but we're also a magazine that has never stopped publishing, that has never once missed an issue. It's a strange position to be in—firmly an institution of the past for some, still a relevant life force for many others. Both viewpoints valid. We haven't had time to fully reflect and frame the history part of our story because we're too busy continuing to write it. That's changing.

In early April, our new archives coordinator moved in. Over the next year Shivaun will be caring for our physical archive (bagging records, repairing green tape, cleaning vinyl) and figuring out the best ways to make it accessible for all the people who can't make it to San Francisco (digitizing record reviews, building a searchable database). She'll be cataloging our ephemera (like the note that came with the review copy of *Raped Ass*—"We read in your magazine that we are influenced by American bands…The American bands we like are the Misfits and Alice Cooper"), tagging and uploading radio shows that aired on KPFA, and much more. We're already reaping the benefits of her tenure: records are actually getting filed! We'll be launching a big fundraiser for the project soon. Do you think it's important to preserve punk history? Do you think it's important that *punks* document punks instead of squares doing it? Donate, you fuck! Keep your eyes on our website to see how. Love it or hate it, *MRR* is an amazing resource that has only just begun to be tapped. I'm humbled and amazed every day by the things that I discover here and I'm so looking forward to making the depths of what we have inside the walls of the compound available to people all over the world.

We won't just be highlighting rare records and classic bands. One of the amazing things about *MRR*—which has always been true—is that everyone gets the same treatment in print. Same font, same size. The reviews are printed in alphabetical order. We review everything that is sent to us that falls within our parameters. You don't have to sell yourself to us. You just have to be punk. The database is gonna encompass it all, from the first utterance of the phrase "Buy or die!" (Tim Yo, Faith/Void split, *MRR* #2) to the most recent (As of this writing: Layla Gibbon, Vial EP, *MRR* #392). It will never be a stagnant archive (new sets of reviews added each month) and I hope that will illustrate to punks around the world how what we do now fits into, pushes back against, resists, and draws from the histories that come before us. It's going to be an unparalleled resource. I can't wait. I hope you're excited, too.

ENDNOTES:

1) Bad Brains, Minor Threat, Void, Die Kreuzen, Conflict.

2) "Today Your Love, Tomorrow the World," "Poison Heart," "You're Gonna Kill that Girl."

3) Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland.

4) I know, I know, I didn't write about *MRR* and Big Media. By the time you get this, maybe *The Media* will have published the interview Katie Alice Greer did with me about just that. A reliable web paper that should be part of your weekly routine anyway.

5) It's come to my attention that not enough people know about Total Chaoz. Lärm before Lärm with a teenage girl singing. No records, but you can hear it on YouTube. It's a must (duh).

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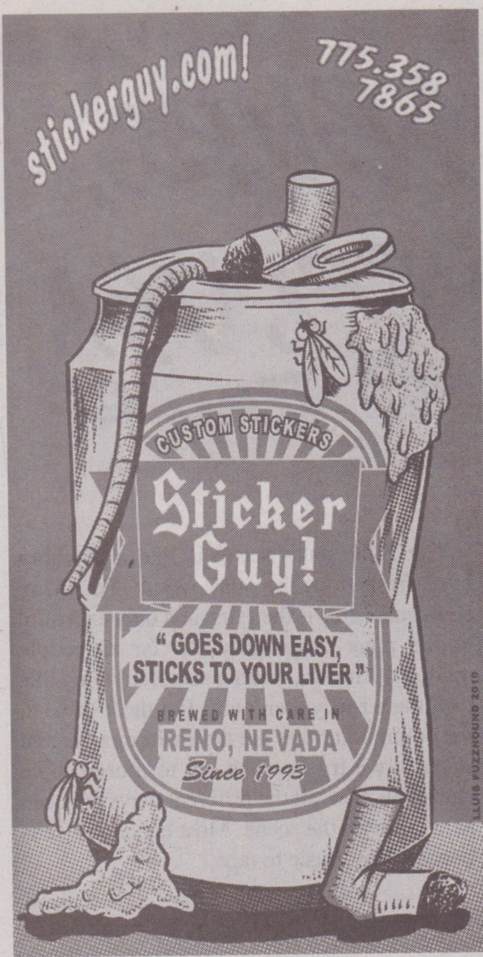
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SCENE REPORT BY HAMPTON MARTIN
PHOTOS BY CAM BONELLI AND SARAH KROCK

Hattiesburg is in southern Mississippi with a population of 47,000. It was a central intersection in the rail business, or something like that way back when, and garnered the nickname of the "Hub City." The University of Southern Mississippi is located here. Any and every sort of alternative music scene in the city thrives off of the college population and the new crop of fresh-faced academics every semester. A lot of people also adamantly claim that rock'n'roll was born here, but who cares.

The Hattiesburg scene is like a newborn baby fresh from the punk womb. For many showgoers, this is their first and only exposure to the punk community. As far as people putting out music, making zines, anything like that, there really aren't any. For those of us in the community that are the main movers and shakers, we try to reach out to more people and show them all the different ways they can help out with the scene. Most bands just self-release their music to tape.

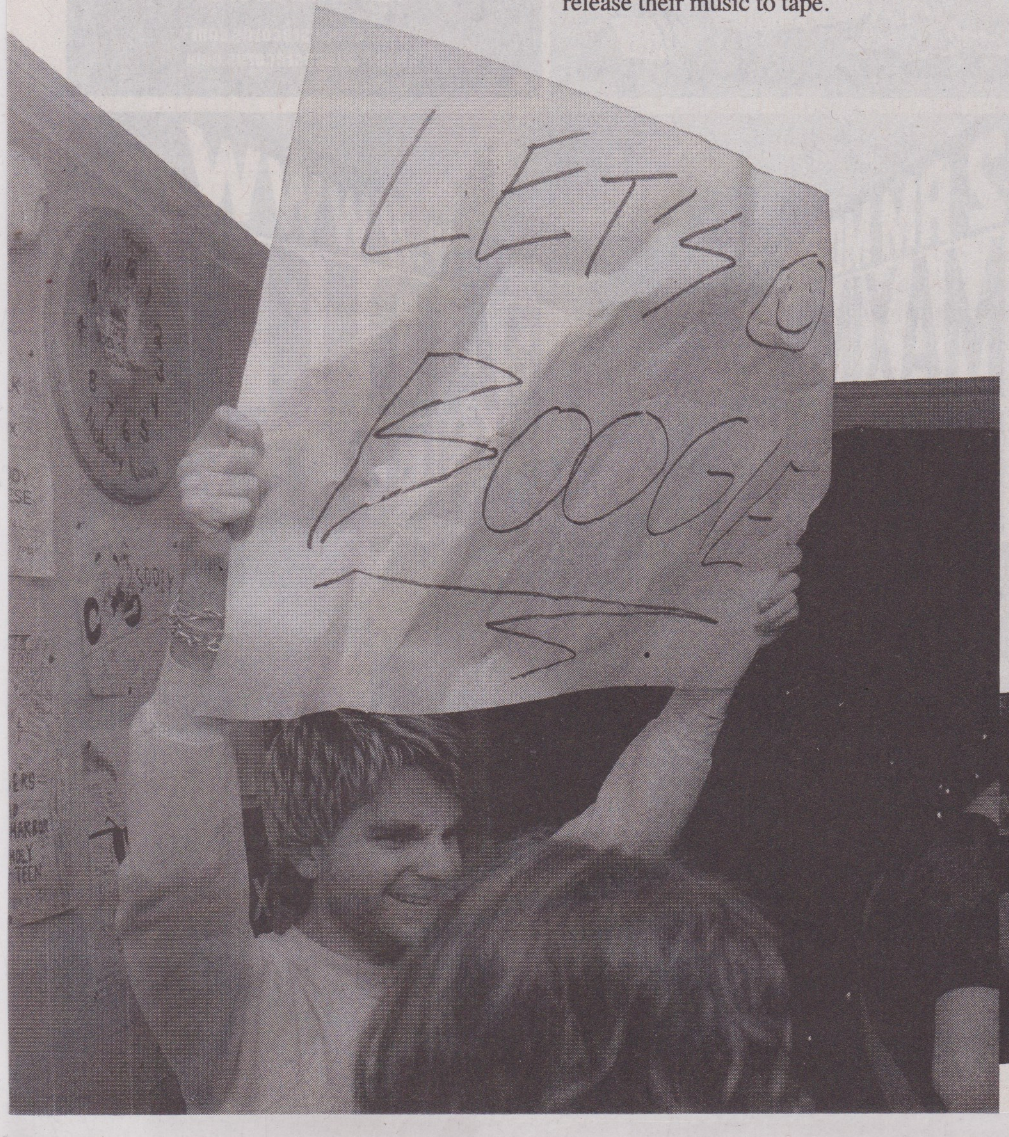
Bands are starting to change their perception of Mississippi just being a state to drive through, a way to get to Texas or New Orleans. Bands like the Brain from Canada and La URSS from Spain came all the way down here, and that blows my mind. The Bug played two different shows in Mississippi on the same tour. It's come a long way from over a year ago when I was begging bands over email to come to Mississippi and reassuring them we aren't all racist assholes. The touring bands that have come through have left a lasting impression on everyone here. So many people who had never heard of a band like Phantom Head until they played the Porn Hall will now tell you that they are their favorite band. These are people who don't fit the "punk" mold perfectly, but just people looking for an escape from daily life on a Tuesday night. I think that's punk a fuck.

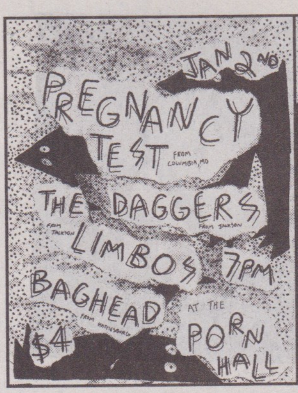
When it comes to the DIY punk scene, I couldn't even begin to tell you any sort of history. I know before I ever got involved there were other individuals putting on house shows, but none of the bands or people have really remained relevant. What we're doing now has never been associated with what anyone has done before us.

Out of all the Hattiesburg bands, Baghead has been around the longest. Baghead is ugly hardcore punk, frantic and fun—not worried about taking anything too seriously. It's music about being weird and feeling weirder. There's a new four-song tape out now with a 7" happening eventually. They're constantly playing shows in Hattiesburg and New Orleans.

Big Bleach are fast and freaky goofy hardcore punk. Songs about being a punk and hating on country boys. Three of the members also play in Baghead. They did their first tour this winter all around the Midwest, and their next release will hopefully be of the 7" variety.

Dumspell are hypnotic post-punk, but still punk. They keep it super fun and the riffs and lyrics get stuck in your heads for days on end.

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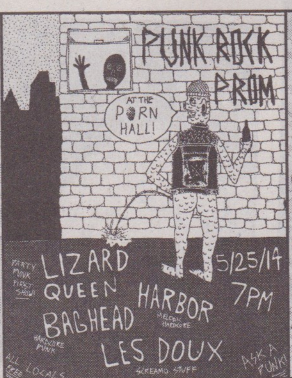
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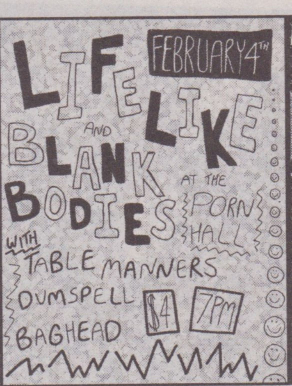
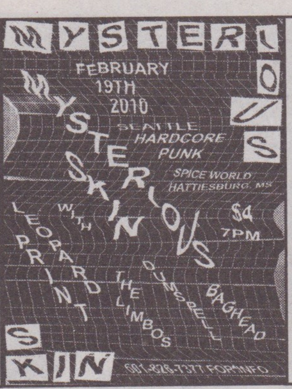
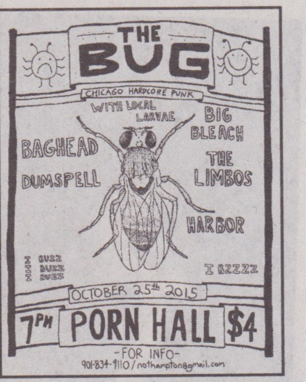

FEBRUARY 4TH
LIFELIKE
AND
BLANK BODIES
AT THE PORN HALL
WITH
TABLE MANNERS
DUMSPELL
BAGHEAD
$4
7PM


MYSTERIOUS
FEBRUARY 19TH 2010
MYSTERIOUS SKIN
SEATTLE HARDCORE PUNK
SPICE WORLD HATTIESBURG, MS
$4
7PM
WITH
LEOPARD PRINT
THE LIMBOS
DUMSPELL
BAGHEAD
SKIN
601-826-7377 FOR INFO


THE BUG
CHICAGO HARDCORE PUNK
WITH LOCAL LARVAE
BAGHEAD
DUMSPELL
BIG BLEACH
THE LIMBOS
HARBOR
I BUZZ
I BUZZ
I BUZZ
I BZZZZ
OCTOBER 25th 2015
7PM
PORN HALL
$4
-FOR INFO-
901-834-9110 / nothampton@gmail.com

Dumspell is members of Baghead and other bands in the area. Going on a short lil' summer tour with Big Bleach. Another tape is on the way and a 12" record coming on the horizon.

Harbor is a band that doesn't really fit with the others, but they exist in the same scene and have supported all the shows and other bands. Shoegazey post-punk kinda stuff. They have a new single out with a few tours under their belt and there's no sign of slowing down.

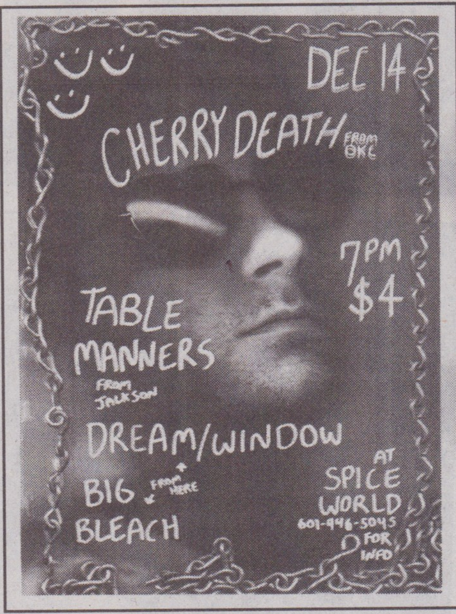
The Limbos have one member who lives in Oxford, MS, two in Jackson, and only one in Hattiesburg. Straightforward hardcore punk to creep and crawl for. Featuring members of Baghead and just about every other past Mississippi punk band. Nothing currently in the works, but that will probably change soon enough.

Criminal Slang is another out of town band that is still important to the Hattiesburg scene. They're from Vicksburg, MS, and play heavy powerviolence. Members have been in countless bands from the past and the singer, Jesse Moore, has been booking every manner of weird punk band in Mississippi for ages. Jesse could tell you countless stories of being a little skate punker in the '90s sending letters to Chris Dodge from Spazz and ending up at punk shows in trailer parks in the middle of nowhere. They're currently on hiatus to write new music.

The biggest punk band around could come play Hattiesburg, but most people here would never think anything extra of it than just "Oh, another punk show. Sick." People here don't care if your band played New York's Alright, and they don't care if this is your first show ever. As long as the band is genuine and the energy is there, people will be diving off of couches, cartwheeling around the room, wearing your band's t-shirt as they walk to their car, and telling their friends about some wild ass band they saw in a living room and bringing them to the next show.

The Porn Hall is one of those living rooms. This spot was born out of necessity. This is home to members of Baghead, Big Bleach, and the Limbos. For the longest time, the Porn Hall has existed as the backbone for this scene. At one point, all the shows and band practices happened and here. The spot has gained a dedicated regular crowd of showgoers. The spot itself is simply a carpeted living room. All the household furniture gets hidden away or shoved to the back of the room. Various pieces of memory foam and blankets line the walls, and a mattress covers a large sliding door into the room. The uncovered walls are speckled with old show flyers and random pieces of artwork barely hanging on by thumbtacks. Shows first started at the Porn Hall two to three years ago and the first show had about twenty people in attendance. Since then, we've crammed something like seventy people into that room in one night. The name Porn Hall itself was just the outcome of some stupid joke that stuck for way too long. What started off as a silly name people felt weird saying has become second nature to many.

As more bands wanted to play Hattiesburg, we decided it was time to expand. I really think people get bored of going to the same venues over and over again. You need to break it up every once in a awhile. Also the neighbors have never been really happy about us having shows. They tolerate us and never call the police, and we want to keep it that way, so we found a new spot.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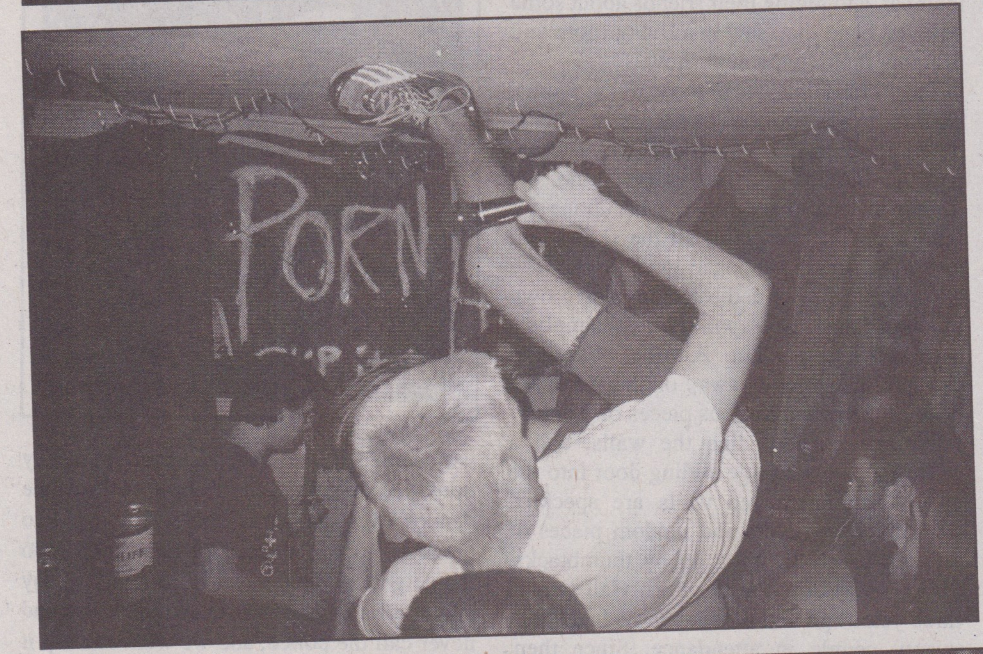
Spice World is the latest house show spot in town. Home to members of Baghead, Big Bleach, and Dumspell, and a living room for shows that's even smaller than the Porn Hall's. There are no basements in Mississippi, by the way—it has something to

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: CANDY PAINT, LIMBOS, HOLY TEEN, BAGHEAD, DUMSPELL

do with the soil. Spice World is still in its infancy compared to the Porn Hall, but people around here seem to really dig it. In between bands sets, you find people hanging out in a nice and fenced in backyard playing fetch with one of the owners' many dogs. Since Hattiesburg is a smaller city, nothing is really a far drive away. Both houses are fairly conveniently located within the city.

There are a few bars around that have punk shows. They're never terrible, but always just kinda middling. They always start super late and the room is so dark you want to fall asleep while some terrible metal band plays over the speakers. Just not a good time. Most of the people at our shows will straight up tell you how much they dislike those places.

Shows at both houses work on a pretty tight shift. Bands load in where they can. A PA is secured last minute or brought down by Jesse Moore (Criminal Slang) from Jackson. Sarah (Baghead/Big Bleach)

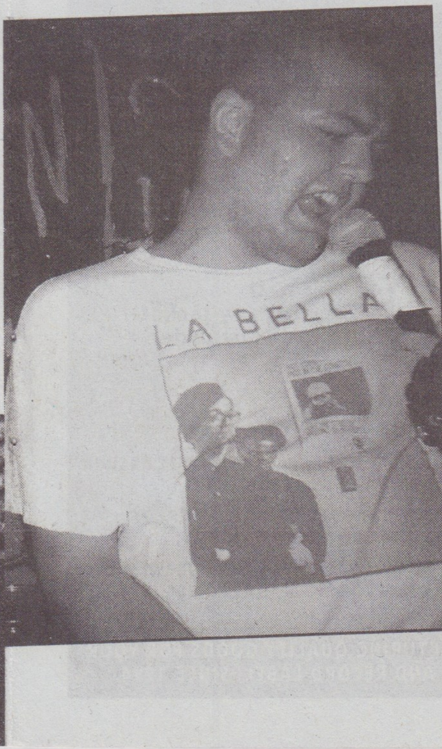


PORN
slip in

cooks up a nice vegan meal for all band members and shows start anywhere from 7:30–8 and end promptly at about 10 pm. Keep the shows short. Avoid unnecessary attraction by ending before the city noise ordinance kicks in. Most local bands all share the same gear and will sometimes play back to back to stop the dreaded fifteen minute smoke break between bands. At our best, we had six bands in two hours with maximum energy the whole time. At the Porn Hall, Sarah contacts the pastor from a church down the road and they agree to let us park at the church as long as we clean up afterwards. At Spice World, there are a few empty parking lots down the street. We always make sure the touring band has top spot in the driveway to load and unload. We usually have a suggested donation of four dollars that's never super strongly enforced. It's never a real problem to get people to pay, and plenty of people give more.

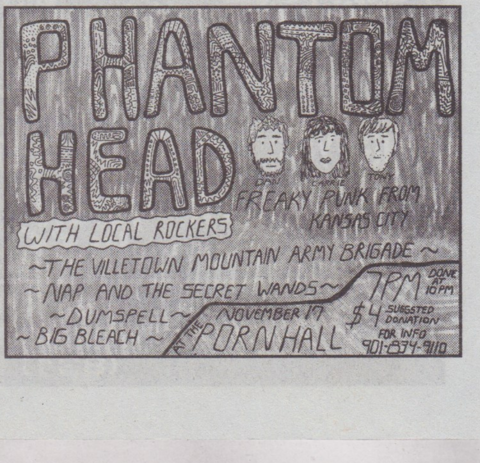
Shows will continue to happen at both houses for as long as we can swing it. More shows are happening in Hattiesburg and it's starting to get a little hectic to sort them all out. We got comfortable having maybe one show a month for a long time. Now we're having two or three shows a month. It can sometimes feel overwhelming for those who run the venues in this small scene.

Whether it's because the shows end fairly early or just because of the scene we have, there are hardly any people who get too fucked up at shows. We never have problems with people being too rowdy or causing any sort of trouble. When we do, it's just from out of town people. With the shows being done early, it also gives people plenty of time to go do whatever else it is they want during the night or to just sit around and chill with the bands afterwards. It gives the touring band the opportunity to kick it and go to bed early if they like. Usually, it's a warm welcome since many bands come to Hattiesburg after a night in New Orleans.



It's an awesome little scene. We don't look like other punk scenes. People here don't dress "punk." Studs, leather, and denim are all cool, but generally people here look like any regular bozo who just got outta class or off work. It's cool and a nice change. People even dance differently here. The majority of people at our shows only know of punk through the Hattiesburg lens. They've never seen how people slam across the country. With no preconceived notions, people just go wild, running around like madmen while others are army crawling on the ground. There's no rhyme or reason, people just scream their lungs out because they've never seen someone plays drums so fast. There's nothing better than seeing someone react so positively and extremely to seeing a punk band. We've just gotten to the point where we occasionally have punk shows twice a month now. People who go to shows here are slowly being exposed to the punk community on a national level and kinda realizing it's something more than just stomping around in a living room on a Wednesday night.

The bands from Hattiesburg and surrounding areas aren't the fastest, heaviest, weirdest, or most talented. We attempt to make our mark by being as goddamn friendly and welcoming as possible. As much as I hate the moniker of southern hospitality, I've always felt that the scene here has exemplified that. We're all aware of how lucky and fortunate we are to even have a scene and for out of town bands to come through town. The last thing any of us want is to push someone or a band away with some bullshit elitist attitude. Every punk show here is a special event. Every show is a chance to demonstrate to some out of town band that small town punks can have just as much fun as any city slickers can, if not more.



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~~LUMPY AND~~ THE DUMPERS

"GOD, WE'RE SO DUMB. WE SHOULDN'T TALK TO OTHER PEOPLE EVER."

Lumpy, Lumpy, Lumpy. Everyone just can't shut up about him. Sure, he runs a great label, he wrote some bonafide modern classics, and his art launched a thousand warty imitators overnight. But he's not all that. The real secret to success? The funniest, most charming, and best-looking backing band in punk: the Dumpers.

The Dumpers are a fluid set. There've been a dozen or so over time, some for one gig or tour, some who cycle in and out, one—drummer, John Birkner—at almost every gig since the very beginning. The MRR coordinators met the current Dumpers core—John, bassist Ben Smith, and guitarist Gabe Karabell—at Whataburger in Oklahoma City during Everything Is Not OK. (They went back to the same Whataburger three hours later.) Lumpy wasn't invited. Over onion rings and spicy ketchup, we discussed the Dumpers Rights movement, the chemical composition of slime, and why this might be the most fun band any of them have ever played in.

Interview by Grace Ambrose, Eli Wald, and Brendan Wells.
Photos by Martin Sorrondeguy and Steven Ruud.

MRR: How long has everyone been in the band?

Ben: This is sad.

Gabe: It started in 2012, right?

Ben: I'm like the fourth bass player. And there have been people after me, too. It changes up.

MRR: Are you the best bass player?

Ben: For sure.

MRR: Wait, who's the most senior Dumper at this table?

John: Who's got the jumbo soda?

Gabe: Let's just make it clear that there would be no band without John.

MRR: Are you the first Dumper?

John: Semi. The very first Dumpers lineup was my other band, Trauma Harness. We were playing a show and it was right after Lumpy recorded the first tape and we were like, "We're gonna learn 'Face the Meat' and we're gonna do it at the end of our set." Lumpy disappeared and just came down for the last song. Somehow people already knew it, they were singing along. It was pretty crazy. That was the first Dumpers thing. So I guess I've been in the band for four years.

MRR: And what about you, Gabe?

Gabe: First show I played with them was in Kansas City in March 2014.

Ben: That was a great night.

Gabe: B.O., who plays guitar but isn't here tonight, couldn't make it because he had a jazz show. So they called me the day before the show and I learned the songs,

MRR: What do you think Lumpy saw in you as a potential Dumper?
Gabe: Me specifically? This guy?

MRR: Yeah, to call you up last minute. Johnny B. once said to me, "Everyone has a little Dumper in them." So what was the little bit of Dumper that Lumpy saw in you?
Gabe: I think Lumpy wants to put his little dumper in a lot of things. And I say no routinely.
John: We've just known Gabe for a really long time.
Ben: And he's a total rocker
John: He shreds.
Gabe: They were in a tight spot. Now we're all friends. Lumpy likes to joke that everyone's totally replaceable. Is that true? From what I've seen…
Ben: Not Johnny. The rest of us...absolutely.

MRR: Is Lumpy a Dumper?
All: No.

MRR: Why?
John: 'Cause he's Lumpy.
Gabe: Dump semantics.

MRR: So it's not like all squares are rectangles, but not all rectangles are squares.
Ben: No, not at all. It's entirely outside of that, whatever that Venn Diagram of logic is.

MRR: Well, what separates Lumpy from the Dumpers?
Ben: Shit attitude.

MRR: Who has the shit attitude?
Ben: Lumpy does: he doesn't like to gamble.

MRR: What are Dumpers Rights? And where and when did they start?
John: Day one.

MRR: Is there a Dumpers Constitution?
Ben: No, not a formalized one. But I'd say the first right is the right to be respected in your instrument.

MRR: What does that mean?
Ben: Sometimes Lumpy likes to really crap up a big stink about like..."You're doing this kind of, uh...inconsistently." Or "You're not hitting it the way I recorded it."
John: And it's like...a slight little thing that doesn't really affect the song.
Ben: It's a little jab, but he really presses it.
Gabe: You gotta stand up!
Ben: It's just straight up bullshit. You gotta stand up for yourself and be like, "No, this is now. You respect me enough to be up here doing this, you're gonna respect me to play these songs for these people. We're all gonna have a great time. I don't see what the big fuss is about."

MRR: What are the other Dumpers Rights?
Gabe: It's more of a unifying union philosophy for the band.
Ben: But also, don't touch our stuff is a really important one. Like granola bars.
John: Oh *god*. Don't get me started.
Ben: It was a pretty…there have just been episodes. And so, don't touch our stuff. Respect our playing. Dumpers eat first. Buy us lunch.

MRR: Do Dumpers Rights apply just at band practice or just at shows or all the time?
John: Pretty much all the time. Well, I don't know. We goof off, we joke around...Lumpy's a good buddy, but we definitely like to gang up on him sometimes when he's being a shithead.
Gabe: And when we are ganging up on him, "Dumpers Rights" is our rallying cry.
John: Sometimes it feels bad, but most of the time not.
Ben: There have been a lot of times where we totally isolate him and cold shoulder him.
John: And then he starts to get really mad and it kind of gets depressing. He gets in a funk.
Gabe: It gets depressing because we are being *super* mean to him. Everyone in the band has known each other forever, so it's, you know…bullying is an outgrowth of friendship.
Ben: He's really pretty sweet if you think about it.
John: Yeah, he's a good guy.

MRR: What's the meanest thing Lumpy has ever done to you?
John: So one time, on tour, his fingernails were getting a *little* long. It was like...
Ben: This was a serious conversation that we had to have.
John: There's another thing, and we're not gonna mention that...
Ben: No, we can't.
John: OK, OK. So I like to bring my cleanly items on tour…

MRR: Are you the cleanest Dumper?
John: I don't know about cleanest.
Ben: Whoa, that is a great question. Who's the cleanest Dumper?

MRR: Y'all look pretty clean.
John: Well it's just one day in. Ben's pretty good.
Ben: I'm not bad, but I really, not to be racialist, but Italian showers and things. Where I'm just putting on new chemicals on top of others.
John: Well, I always have my fingernail clippers. Gotta keep my toenails, fingernails clean. Tour is crazy, you know. One day Lumpy really wanted to use them, and I'm like, "No, man. No." And I'm just in the very back of the van, and he's up front in the passenger seat. And I just got this huge box of granola bars.
Ben: Good ones.
John: Fancy ones.

MRR: From Whole Foods or some shit?
John: No, not Whole Foods. Not that good. But he's like…"OK." and he looks me in the eye and just peels the package open and just starts eating them. And I'm like, "No—stop, Lumpy. Stop." And he just keeps going. And he's like, "Give me the toenail clippers." And I'm like, "No, man, that's gross!" and then he just keeps eating my granola bars. I think he ate like four or five granola bars total. And that's a lot! That was a huge slap in the face. That's a lot of money and a lot of granola bars.
Ben: I can't over exaggerate how really shitty it was, how really upset he was getting—
John: It was mean.
Ben: —and how when we stopped at a gas station, Johnny had to get out to go use the bathroom, and B.O. and I both had a serious talk with Lumpy, like, "Dude, I know you think this is funny, but it's really pissing him off, and you have to cut this shit out. I know you think it's funny, but just stop eating the granola bars." And then he fuckin' picked one up and peeled it open and ate it.

MRR: So who gets picked on the most?
Gabe: John.
Ben: John.
John: Yeah, it's kind of me.

MRR: 'Cause you're the favorite. Is it like a big brother, little brother kind of thing?
Ben: Lumpy's the little brother, but he's like the fuckface...

MRR: What's the meanest thing you've seen Lumpy do to someone who's not a Dumper?
Gabe: He's really not that bad! He's actually really nice to us, too.
Ben: He buys us food.
Gabe: He probably gave someone an F once.
Ben: He didn't have a rating on Rate My Professor until last tour when we were grading him. He was so fucking mad.

MRR: How many flames did you give him?
Ben: Oh yeah, on hotness. I think three. I think he's a three.

MRR: Out of five?
Ben: Yeah. I probably gave him four. He's not a five.

MRR: Were you being honest in that rating?
Ben: Super honest.
Gabe: If you wanna know what it's like to be a Dumper, look at the Rate My Professor site.

MRR: So what have you learned from Lumpy? He's a teacher. Does his pedagogy extend to the band?
Ben: No, it doesn't.
John: No, it does not.
Gabe: Let's talk about that last practice, where he told you about slaying the chupacabra.

John: God, last practice sucked. I had just gotten off work and I scrambled to get everything there. Gabe had to go to work in like an hour. We had one practice to figure one song out, had to cram it in to do this one *stupid* song. They're all there, they've been there for like fifteen minutes or something, and like, you know, I maybe had a bad day at work. I was trying to hustle and bustle to get it done and he's like, "You know Gabe has to be at work in hour, right?", talking to me like I'm taking a while. And I'm like, "Yeah, dude, cut me some slack here!"

There's one little drum part that I wasn't playing right, I had an extra hit on the bass drum and he's like, "You know, this part's pretty much open for interpretation, like if you wanna do a fill here, it's cool, do whatever you wanna do, spice it up, John!" Then five minutes later he's like, "It'd be nice if you could play what I did on the recording." *[laughs]* Then I threw a Ding Dong at him.

Gabe: At a lot of times, you're not great at telling him when he's pissing you off and pushing your buttons.

John: Ehhh.

Gabe: So he keeps doing it. B.O.'s strategy is to not laugh, to not act like anything Lumpy does is funny, when in reality, it's kind of hard not to laugh. He did a mean thing last tour where I brought a big jar of peanut butter to eat—

John: Oh ho ho ho.

Gabe: —for snacks. You know, people think Dumpers makes a lot of money, but we don't make enough money at shows to buy food for everybody. No way. So we bring snacks, 'cause we're on tour. And as we're falling asleep in Fort Worth, talking about something in our sleeping bags, and Lumpy comes over with his pants down, pulls his underwear down, and has my jar of peanut butter, and sticks his dick in it. He's like "Hey guys, how are we doing? What's going on?" and we just crack up 'cause it's the funniest thing ever. "That's our peanut butter! We need that!" "No, it's still good, I just ate some. *Slurp slurp*. It's still good." B.O.'s over there in another sleeping bag, stone cold, and John and I are like uncontrollably laughing 'cause it's really, really funny. It's also mean to the peanut butter.

MRR: And B.O.'s like, "Don't encourage him."

Gabe: Yeah, he's not gonna keep doing it if we're not laughing. So it's like, I'm gonna get a jar of peanut butter and put razorblades in it, but B.O. really stops him by not laughing.

John: He does this thing all the time on tour where if we're trying to sleep, he will just bug the shit out of some people.

Ben: "Hey, dude."

Gabe: "What's up?" Tapping you on the head with his long ass fingernails.

John: He'll just pull his pants down. Everyone's seriously tired and trying to go to bed and he's just standing there naked. "Sup, man! What's up? What do you wanna do?" He's super awake at night. I think he's just excited on tour and wants to do stuff.

MRR: I've seen you guys a bunch of times and I've never seen Lumpy's butt. He's not like one of those naked people.

John: He is, but just around his friends.

Ben: We played with Urochromes in a tiny basement in St Louis a few months ago, and it was a very intimate show, and it was all ass all the time.

Gabe: We went to Kansas City, and he was on this relatively big stage in front of like, 100 people. First song we count in and he's turned around with his pants down, bent over, butt spread wide open.

MRR: Approximately how many times have you seen Lumpy's wiener?

John: Can't even count. Just this morning, as we were waking up, he said something goofy and I flipped him off, like, "I don't know what you're saying, but fuck you," and then he just came over and was like "Oh yeah? Good morning, Johnny!" and he flipped his wiener out and tried to dip it down in my face. I'll probably see it tonight.

MRR: Why does Lumpy wear shorts all the time?
Ben: He loves to skate.
John: I've known Lumpy for a long time. He's got good legs. He's also been one of the sweatiest boys I've ever met in my life. And hairiest.

MRR: How hairy is Lumpy's butt?
John: It's like, the hairiest. It's literally, I'm not even kidding, it's literally *thee hairiest* butt I've ever seen in my life. We can get you guys a picture if you need to put it in there. 'Cause it's *fucking hairy*. He skateboards a lot and always sweats a lot and all the bands he's ever played drums in he just sweats puddles and stuff. So he usually just has his shirt off and shorts.

MRR: Is he the sweatiest and hairiest in the band?
Ben: I sweat a lot.
John: I'm kind of hairy, but he's got the hairiest butt for sure. I sweat a lot, too. I sweat heavily.

MRR: If there was a test that you had to pass to become a Dumper, like, if you guys got to choose the next set of Dumpers, what tasks would you set for them?
John: You have to be into every Ramones record that's ever been released.

MRR: Every single one?
John: Yes. 'Cause we just listen to the Ramones. It's the best band ever. Everyone knows that, but we really appreciate the deep cuts. All the later albums, too.

MRR: "Poison Heart" is my favorite late Ramones song.
John: Oh yeah, it's amazing. But have you heard "Crummy Stuff"? Check it out.
Ben: That is the best Ramones song.
John: "Freak of Nature," we've covered that. We always talk about doing this a cappella version of "Danny Says."
Ben: A beautiful, musical, Broadway rendition.
Gabe: "*Lumpy says we gotta go...*"
John: To be a Dumper, you just gotta be a ripper and not complain.
Ben: Suffer.

MRR: You wouldn't haze someone into being a Dumper?
John: No, you can't do that.
Gabe: If anything, we absolutely just would try and abuse Lumpy more. We don't really want to antagonize him, though. Lumpy's great. The antics have died down a little bit.
John: Basically you gotta be pretty dumb when it comes to your humor. You gotta love the movie *Dirty Work*.

MRR: So there's no hazing, no one gets dumped in?
John: There's a good friend, Kel, who plays in a few bands around town. We've known him for years. Lumpy was like, "Yeah, he'd be a good Dumper. He has really bad teeth."

MRR: Has anyone ever peed their pants laughing on a Dumpers tour?
John: Lumpy has peed his pants to make us laugh. Do you guys remember the Lenny Kravitz video where his wiener pops out? His lil wiener was saying "I want to get away," and then he rips his pants.

So we got to this house we were playing in Cincinnati. We got there super early and we were really bored, 'cause no one was there yet. We were just waiting around, and there was a pile of spare clothes they were just giving away. We had just watched that video on tour, and Lumpy took a pair of shorts and was like, "Alright guys, I'll be right back," and he ripped open the crotch really big and the butt area, too, and wrote "Lenny Kravitz" on each pant leg really big, and then he just came back out, bending over. "Hey guys, who am I? *Whoaaa!*" and dipped down and his weiner would fall out. We were just dying laughing, and then he was like, "Ohhhh," and he just stood there and all of a sudden he just pissed his pants. It's so funny, just someone peeing their pants. 'Cause it's like...it just erupts. There was a pee outline.

MRR: Who is each of y'all's favorite and least favorite Dumper?
Gabe: Dumpers Rights prohibits that question.
Ben: Yeah, I can't answer that. Everyone's got their own strengths.
John: This is true.
Ben: Gabe has the charm. You're a frontrunner in the race for most philosophical Dumper.
John: Yeah, Gabe's really smart.
Ben: Gabe's super smart. Looks deep into some existential questions.
John: Andy Peterson is a great Dumper, too. He's gotta be smarter than Gabe.
Ben: *Why* haven't we been talking about Andy?!
Gabe: We need to talk about Andy more. He's studying to be an aerospace engineer.
John: He's a man of little words, but his brain is always ticking.

MRR: Who are Lumpy's favorite and least favorite Dumpers?
John: Technically Lumpy's girlfriend is a Dumper because she screams on "Bat."

MRR: So you're saying she's his favorite?
John: Well, she's his girlfriend. And she came up with the term "Sex Pit."

MRR: Does she get royalties on that?
John: I guess.

MRR: Do you all get royalties?
John: Every once in awhile we buy a pizza or something with band money. Well, I guess we're going to Australia. That's all the money we have in our bank account.

MRR: What's happening in Australia?
John: We're going in May, it's gonna be crazy. We're playing fifteen shows.
Gabe: We're driving to all the shows.
John: We're playing Melbourne three times.

I guess there are different venues.
Ben: How many days are we playing? I think we're only there for fifteen days.
John: I'm super stoked. Getting to do all of this stuff and travel, going to Canada three times, never thought I'd get to do that, and going to Australia is like *what the fuck?!* After we paid with the band money, we each only had to pay like $200.
Ben: What animal are you most excited to see in Australia?
John: We keep joking about me holding a koala. It'd be so cool. But I don't know.
Ben: What constellation are you most excited to see in the Southern Hemisphere?
John: Ooh.
Ben: That's some deep science.

MRR: What's your answer?
Ben: Orion, 'cause you can see it in both hemispheres. Shout out to Orion.

MRR: What are the most disgusting substances you have encountered as a Dumper? The biggest messes?
John: Well, Brian Galecki, sitting right here, drinking a chocolate malt, Brian is responsible for two of the three messiest Dumpers sets I've been a part of. One at Bonerville, with Dawn of Humans. He brought this huge bag of old donuts that he got.
Ben: Oh, I forgot about the donuts.
John: A *huge* bag.
Ben: That was so fucking incredible.
John: Ben, you made slime for that. We were like, "We're gonna throw it everywhere, it's gonna be cool," but we didn't remember Brian was bringing the donuts, it was a total surprise. It was someone's birthday. We didn't really throw the slime out too well, kind of just kicked it and it fell everywhere and went on the floor and the donuts got smashed and people were sliding like slip and slide on the floor.

We also played Black Sheep Cafe in Springfield, and they made all this fake slime out of spaghetti with food coloring in it.
Brian: It was like 500 servings of green spaghetti.
John: A kiddie pool full of it.

MRR: When did slime start?
Ben: Primordial ooze.

MRR: Okay, when did *Dumpers* slime start?
John: I don't know. Here's some shit coming out: I've been into horror movies forever. I'm a huge fan, a huge nerd about it. And like, Lumpy slowly discovered this stuff. A few years before Dumpers. He wasn't a diehard. He hasn't seen a lot of movies and stuff. I give him credit, though, that he like, thinks of most of the weird gooey stuff. I would just show him all these movies and say "You gotta see this! This looks like your drawings and stuff, man!" The first time we watched *Gremlins* was like two or three years ago, and he was like, "Whoa, look at all the goo!" and I was like, "Yeah, dude!" I don't know how it started.

MRR: How do you make it?
Gabe: Ben excretes it.
Ben: I've tried a few different recipes. It's a weird combination of stuff. There's a few different ways to do it — xanthum gum, cornstarch.

MRR: When you go on tour, do you make slime at every stop?
Ben: We only did that for New York's Alright.
John: We were like, this is gonna be a big fest, a crazy show, so...We thought it was funnier to make a huge bucket of slime and have it in the back of the van all the way there from St. Louis. We were like [whispers] "There's slime back there, dude!" at all the shows on the way.

Gabe: There was a show where a woman was very upset that there wasn't slime, and she threw a pint glass at Ben. She was mad. It was a crowd of dads and rockabilly guys.
Ben: I think her band is playing in St. Louis soon.
John: *Oh ho ho ho*. We should slime her!
All: *OHHHHHHHHHH!*
Ben: Done.
John: "Remember us?!"
Ben: That was the only time in my life that I've been assaulted at a show while playing, and it was because we were poseurs for not having slime.
John: After that she went on stage and pushed Lumpy off the stage, really mad about it. Our friends heard her talking outside afterwards: "I saw these videos. They *sucked* tonight, they didn't bring any slime." It's hilarious. I had a funny conversation with Lumpy, like… "Wait a minute…What's too much slime? What about *Ghostbusters 2*, when that art museum was covered with slime and stuff?" He was like, "That's not too much slime—that's an adequate amount of slime."

MRR: How do you feel about other people copping the slime aesthetic?
John: I don't know. I guess there's that whole slimey creepy gooey punk.
Ben: People like to be icky. "Inhibitions are like the bones in a creature. You pull all the bones out and you get a floppy jelly."
John: I don't really think it started with us. I wanna think that Marc Summers…
Gabe: Well, in the end, it does go back to Lumpy first.

MRR: This is a real question, in terms of how I think it must be weird for Lumpy to see his art and his vibe ripped off by so much people. It's something that is very present. And was very present in a super short amount of time. I think the same thing is happening to Mark Winter from NWI.

Gabe: And Mark's style is even more distinctive. Lumpy's attitude about it is really funny to me. I mean, cause he just doesn't care at all. He's going to keep doing what he does. And he thinks Dumpers is a joke anyway.

John: He once said, "Yeah, I thought Dumpers was the dumbest thing I've ever done. I was just trying to just be weird and have fun and be myself, but it got really popular, so I had to make something dumber." So that's when he made Cal and the Calories.

MRR: The Dumpers and Lumpy's involvement, his whole vision and stuff, that's him, though, right?

Ben: It's not a pose or an act or anything, or even just a small facet of him. It is very much who he is and the entire composition of the band is no joke. And I think 100% people who replicate it aren't joking either. I think it 100% touches on a beautiful, corny Nickelodeon part of all of us. It means something to people, that fucking loose, gooky silliness of it fucking means something…It's still evocative of a core thing within punk. I love when people hate on it for the exact same reason because *yeah*, it ain't serious. But it's also not meant to be offensive. It's not some bullshit cock rocker or un-PC nonsense. It is nonsense, but it's 100% in the spirit of totally frank childish fun.

John: It's totally genuine.

Ben: A core part of what punk is.

MRR: Do you clean up after yourselves?

John: Oh yeah.

Ben: Every fucking time. Put that in there for Dan-O. Every fucking time.

John: It was so funny in New York 'cause Cody was totally naked cleaning it up.

Ben: That man's insane.

Gabe: I agree with Ben. It might not be serious, but it's very sincere. And when we play shows, it's not a joke.

John: I had this sweet Slimer back patch that says "Slimed Again" 'cause I fucking love *Ghostbusters*. There were times when I was going to a show after the Dumpers kind of got popular and I'd be like "Oh shit, I hope they don't think that I feel like I have to wear this." No, this is actually my normal outfit. Sometimes before I guess people knew what we looked like, people thought we were gonna be like super punk and wear leather and studs and everything and sick boots and chains, but then we showed up at shows and we were just nerds wearing jeans and a t-shirt. "Hey, what's up, yeah, we're the Dumpers." It's cool to smash the whole set of expectations about what bands should look like, or punk fashion.

I still love playing in the Dumpers, and I'm so thankful for it because it's like…I mean, there's a lot of bullshit involved, but in a sense it's total no bullshit like, "OK, these are some badass songs." Not trying to toot our horn, but good job for Lumpy because I think every song is a total hit and I would be really into them even if I didn't play in the band. Everything's catchy, there are cool fun singalong choruses. It makes the live shows awesome.

MRR: Is Dumpers the most fun band you have ever played in?

John: Maybe

Gabe: It's close.

John: It's probably the most fun, hanging out with these guys, the crew of people in it.

Gabe: Consistently for sure. And the longest-running.

John: There are other bands I've been in where it's more of a personal, spiritual thing, where you get more of a musician's high or whatever where your brain slowly is gone and you're like "Oh my god, this is awesome."

Ben: This isn't that. You don't get the sublime sense of flow. But it is just impossibly fucking fun. And being on tour with everybody is so easy.

John: Through this band, I've met so many people. The Dumpers changed my life. I know you guys want all the dirt, but it's just that we joke on Lumpy all the time and fart.

MRR: There are some basic questions about Lumpy that we need the answers to: Star sign?

Ben: Snail.

MRR: Favorite color?

Ben: Mauve. Taupe.

MRR: Favorite food?

John: He does love burritos. Oh my god, he *loves* Chik-Fil-A.

Ben: Put that in. It's some bullshit. It's some straight bullshit.

John: Yesterday we took a detour to go to one Chik-Fil-A and it was closed. And then he was like, "It's cool, we'll go to the other one." Every time he eats it he's like, "God, I love this gay-bashing chicken." When we got back on the highway, he was like, "Well, that took an hour. Worth it!"

MRR: What was Lumpy like as a kid?

Ben: His mommy works for NASA.

MRR: So he's an alien.

John: Whoa, I didn't even think about that. He's a test subject.

Ben: It's an important part of it.

MRR: He's a space baby.

John: He didn't have cable and didn't watch TV a lot growing up, so there's all these moments…like, "You've never seen this movie? You've never seen *Diehard*?" Or just any movie. He just found out about *The Mask* like two years ago and got obsessed with Jim Carrey. It's so funny because he's just being exposed to all this weird stuff.

Ben: I remember when he found out about Tom Green. He found out about Tom Green like five years ago.

John: So he's just discovering it now. It's awesome and beautiful to see 'cause he's just like seeing it for the first time and is totally blown away and still keeps getting more influences for his art and music.

Gabe: Lumpy makes a lot of awesome drawings. But he's been drawing this one lately that's a butt bending over and the ballsack hanging down and the butt has eyes on it and the ballsack is its nose and the anus is his mouth.

John: It's awesome.

Gabe: We've been seeing that one *a lot*.

Ben: It's pretty funny: a few years ago, even before the whole Lumpy thing, he was playing in a lot of bands and would just draw weird graffiti monsters. Kind of similar, but very different to what you see now. It's cool to see him actually get really good and perfect his craft. There's different eras, like the butt thing. He keeps making different characters and it's cool to see it progress. His stages.

MRR: He's having that Nickelodeon era Ben mentioned for the first time.

John: It's truly genuine.

Ben: It's new. It's not nostalgic, it's new.

MRR: Is it true that y'all sometimes learn songs and then just start playing them when Lumpy doesn't know? Have you ever stumped him? Does he get in on vocals when that happens?

Gabe: Usually he leaves in disgust. We played "Down Around the Bend," the CCR song, at the show with the Achtungs. That was totally unplanned. I just started playing it and everyone jumped in 'cause they knew it, and our friend Nick grabbed the microphone and sang and Lumpy threw his hands up in the air and was like "Fuck this."

John: It was a great cover.

Ben: We did "Bloodstains." He had no idea what to do.

John: Sometimes it's funnier just playing classic punk covers. One time we planned it out with Mickey from KC. We called him and said, "Hey dude, we're gonna do a DK's song, let's just do 'Too Drunk to Fuck' 'cause it's hilarious." We played it as the second song. It was so awesome. We were like, "Wasn't that funny?" and Lumpy was like "No, it sucks because it throws the whole momentum off!!"

MRR: So Lumpy is also replaceable?

John: Oh, yes he is. We're a solid back-up band. We always go into ska / reggae version of the songs. They'll look at me and there's this part where the guitars are supposed to solo on "Gnats in the Pisser," and we always

joked about me doing a huge drum solo over it 'cause it's really long. Gabe and B.O. both got together and then I was ready and just soloed the whole time. We have all these different cues for like "DO THIS!" "REGGAE BREAKDOWN." It's super fun 'cause it's on the fly and that's the best part.

Gabe: That makes me think we should tell the story about the Pete Henry benefit show. Our friend, a much beloved rock'n'roller in St Louis, Pete Henry from the Pubes, is now a bike racer, and he fell off his bike in a cyclocross race and shattered his pelvis really bad. This guy is the most positive, energetic, loved person, so we put on a big benefit show for him. It was like eight or nine bands. It was a huge fun night. So of course the funniest thing to do is dress Lumpy up like he had a terrible accident.

John: Like in bandages and stuff

Ben: He got a wheelchair.

John: He looked like a mummy.

Ben: It was me and him in the men's room just wrapping him in bandages and toilet paper.

John: He had to sit in the stall for like half an hour. Waiting for the show to start.

Ben: People pooping next to him. The venue had a huge long ramp for going from the men's room to the front of the room. It goes around the side of the dance floor, so it's hilarious. So I wheel him out. "Excuse me guys, excuse me guys, we're gonna need a lot of space here." I set the mic up for him, make sure everything's okay, that he's gonna be alright. "Guys, I just really hurt myself."

John: "We're here to honor Pete, we're here to help him out for his shattered pelvis and everything, but actually as I was hanging up a 'Save Pete Henry' banner on the water tower, I fell off and broke every bone in my body. But our set's not about me, it's about Pete." It was monotone the whole time. He sounded super bummed out. I was laughing so hard. The first song we played, he was singing, sitting in the wheelchair. Singing, super out of it. We did one or two this way and then he was like, "I just wanna take this time to say this is also the last Dumpers show ever." It was so quiet and I was just laughing so hard. Some people were laughing, but most people were just like "What?" It was more confused than laughter and then by the third or fourth song he fell over and got up.

Ben: It's a miracle!

John: Then everyone just went crazy.

We like to pie people. There was one show where we pied Lumpy. We all planned it out. He said we were all replaceable, so we were really fed up. And then like after the first song, or at the beginning of the set, Ben pied him, and he was like "OK, you got me, it's a pie, whatever." And then the next song someone pies him again. We all pied him three times. There was a separate instance at a Spits show, a huge St. Louis show. We pied Rob Rusizka. We just pied him 'cause he set up the show and he's just a really great guy. We all like to rip on each other all the time. So we did that and then he waited like two years. He kept saying "I'm gonna get you." Time wears off and we all forget it. At the show he gave everyone a pie and they all come and pie us, three years later revenge. He pied B.O. and Ben first, and I was up on this huge drum riser on the stage, and I was like "Hahahah, this is hilarious, you guys just got pied" and I felt someone and I looked around and just got a complete pie in the face.

Ben: When was the last pieing that happened in St. Louis?

John: It might have been that. We need to bring it back.

Ben: I'm coming back to town, baby!

MRR: Anything you wanna set straight?

Gabe: Yeah. Don't talk shit about Lumpy.

Lumpy and the Dumpers will wtour Australia in May 2016. The Huff My Sack LP will be available later this year.

CONCEALED BLADE

Concealed Blade is what one might call a Pittsburgh supergroup, if the city's natural self-effacing nature didn't implicitly forbid such a term. Featuring members of well-loved punk and hardcore outfits like Hounds of Hate, No Time, Blood Pressure, Heartless, S.L.I.P., and others, it's unsurprising that Pittsburgh punks approached the band's debut with a certain amount of anticipation.

Which is why, as a local, it's hard to talk about Concealed Blade without talking about their first show, at the Rock Room in Pittsburgh's Polish Hill neighborhood. They'd just started playing when I got there at midnight, and the room was unusually dark—even for that dingy bar—and I was immediately engulfed in a sweaty sea of black denim. I couldn't see anything, but between the band's top-speed frantic aggression, punctuated by dive bombs and shout-along choruses, and the abandon of singer Nick Pilz' seething madman vocals, I didn't have to.

I've since seen Concealed Blade enough times to know that the first show wasn't a fluke. But that night will stay forever burned into my memory as a night where punks, 'cores, and metal heads moshed as one. As guitarist Flynn Knight Collins puts it, "We're a true unity band." He's at least half joking (I think), but what is more unifying than a good time?

In the fall of 2015, I met up with Collins, Pilz, drummer Jay Wiggin, guitarist Nick "Scud Lee" Leombruno, and bassist Adam Thomas, at the garage-turned-house where Wiggin lives with Hounds of Hate bassist Dave Rosenstraus. This is also where they practice and where they recorded their wildly catchy demo and tour tape: Rosenstraus runs his label/recording studio, Braddock Hit Factory, out of the basement.

While we wait for the stragglers—Scud arrives late, and then Wiggin disappears to take a phone call—a VHS copy of Creepshow *plays on a '90s-era big screen projection TV. Thomas is a horror movie expert of sorts, and punctuates the movie with enthusiastic commentary ("That part might make some people queasy" he warns of the cockroach storyline). Someone tells a story about the time Pilz yelled at a girl who cut in front of him at Taco Bell; someone else initiates a lengthy digression about getting free samples at Trader Joe's. Staying focused is a challenge—no member of Concealed Blade would ever pass up an opportunity for a good-natured jab or esoteric joke.*

Most of the more absurd conversational rabbit holes have been edited out to leave more room for discussions of the weirdness of Pittsburgh, the performativity of hardcore, and the band's collective goal of staying chill.

Introduction and interview by Margaret Welsh, the music editor at the Pittsburgh City Paper*.*
Photos provided by Angela Owens and Brian Wilson.

MRR: Can you tell me a little about how Concealed Blade got started?

Flynn: Concealed Blade started when Hounds of Hate and No Time were on tour together in Europe. We started talking about starting a band together with the [goal] of playing shows in Pittsburgh because both of our bands had trouble playing more often in Pittsburgh. And we wanted another band to [play] local shows. We heard a really awesome band name that someone was thinking about using for their band, so we stole it. That was the nail in the coffin.

Jay: We stole the name from a Norwegian guy.

MRR: Does he know?

Flynn: Oh, he knows. He was bummed.

Jay: Yeah, and we were going to start a band so that [Pilz] could sing. None of us had ever heard him sing before, but then he sang one part of a Hounds of Hate song in Helsinki.

Nick: It was Münster.

Jay: Oh yeah, it was the last day of tour. And he sounded like a lunatic. And we said, "Hey, this band might actually work out!"

MRR: What was keeping your other bands from playing as much as you wanted?

Flynn: Well, Hounds of Hate—our singer, Trey, doesn't live here, he lives in Richmond. So that always makes playing difficult. I feel like Blood Pressure played every show for like three months. And we kind of wanted to relieve Blood Pressure somewhat.

Jay: There was a *little too much pressure*.

MRR: What was the concept behind Concealed Blade? Was it to get as many guitar squeals into the shortest amount of time possible?

Scud: "Whammy bar gymnastics," as one reviewer put it.

Flynn: I think that the concept was just… ignorant hardcore that was fun. Lil' bit of Boston, a lil' bit of England, a whole lot of whammy.

Jay: We wanted to become as enormously successful as possible within the shortest amount of time.

Flynn: So we wrote an entire record that sounds just like GNR. It didn't work out, we scrapped it, we had about three hours to put something together, and we did. The rest is history.

MRR: Any specific bands that you're trying to emulate in any particular way?

Jay: Well, we steal things from lots of places.

Flynn: Yeah, you can never have enough stealing. Antidote, great band to steal from, Blood Pressure, good band to steal from… We have a nice Government Warning part, we have a kind of SSD part, some Abused parts. We're a very referential band.

MRR: Since you're all in other bands, what sort of musical itch does Concealed Blade scratch for each of you?

[*long pause*]

Jay: I honestly have no idea why I'm in this band. [*laughter*]

Flynn: It's the most fun of my bands…

Jay: Yeah, it is. I think just playing in this band is almost effortless fun.

Flynn: It is. It's a good crew. Very silly. It's the dumbest band I'm in, let's be frank.

Jay: It's very stupid music, played stupidly.

Flynn: For…

Jay: …Stupid people

MRR: So, the disdain for your fans, let's talk about that a little bit…But really: I've heard a lot of you guys—maybe jokingly—talk about being freaks and misfits of sorts…

Flynn: I'd say all of us are pretty well adjusted except for Scud.

Nick: I'm almost a doctor.

Jay: That's true…

Scud: We range here from medical professionals to assistant-to-the-janitor of a tattoo shop. And everyone in between.

Jay: Here's what I'll say: I think that I've done such a good job of organizing my life around punk stuff that I sometimes take for granted that the people I'm surrounded by are people I can tolerate. And people I can tolerate by and large are weird freaky people who for one reason or another find sort of status quo existence unsatisfactory in at least some small way.

Nick: What're you tryna say, man?

Jay: I guess I'm just trying to say, when you get down to it…

Flynn: …We're all a little bit weird

Jay: Punk, at this point in my life—bearing down on 30—it's a method that I used to forestall what seems like the inevitability of adulthood. So I get to hang out with these childish morons and make stupid moron music.

MRR: As a band, I don't really don't see you guys fitting into a specific scene aside from the more general Pittsburgh punk scene…

Flynn: I'd say we're pretty big in the tabletop gaming world.

MRR: …My question being, where do you see yourselves in the local scene? And in the national scene, musically speaking?

Nick: Pretty much just the Rock Room.

Jay: Yeah, we've played the Rock Room about fourteen times.

Flynn: We're the Rock Room house band

MRR: Can you guys describe the Rock Room for me?

Scud: The Rock Room is a place where you can have a dinner, of sorts…

Nick: Pizza boats! Or pierogis. For ten cents.

Scud: …and get completely wasted and spend eleven dollars. *If* that.

Flynn: It's a yinzer dive bar kept alive only by punk.

Jay: And it's got crazy flame neon lights.

Adam: My tattoo got infected when it scraped across the floor. Nick threw me on the floor and I had a fresh tat.

Flynn: When Nick fell down at our last show there, it looked like someone had covered his entire back with black grease paint.

Jay: Also—to really set the scene—you have to understand that in Pittsburgh, you're still allowed to smoke inside. Which, for Americans, is unprecedented. I grew up in the state of New Jersey and they banned smoking when I was like fifteen.

Flynn: It's a nasty–ass den of iniquity. And it's one of the most Pittsburgh places in Pittsburgh. And they have a working cigarette machine.

Scud: It's a nice place. A great place to start a family.

Jay: I would believe that a family or two has been started at the Rock Room…But none of this answers Margaret's original question.

Adam: We're hard enough for the 'core and we're punk enough for the punks. We kinda have a little bit of something for everybody.

Flynn: We're beasts of no nation.

Adam: Yes. Whatever the fuck that means,

Jay: I feel like these days, people are less interested in adhering to strict genre rules. I feel like people are more open to seeing different kinds of music, sometimes on the same kinds of shows. We don't play exclusively with idiot hardcore bands.

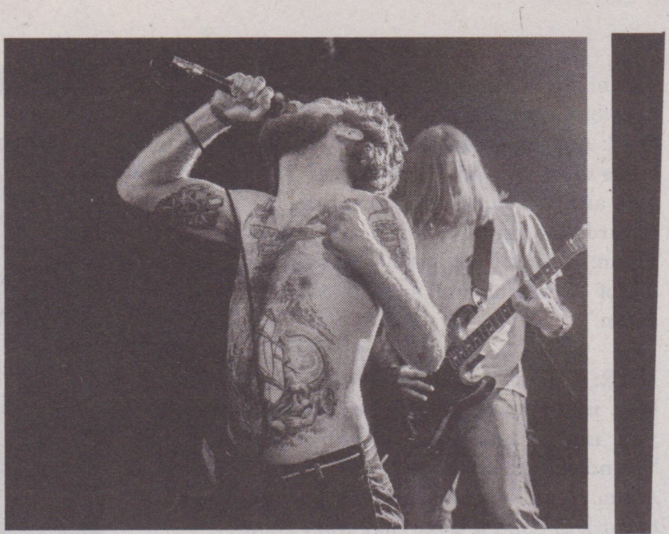
MRR: Is this a band that could have formed in another city? Or is there something uniquely Pittsburgh about Concealed Blade?

Flynn: I feel like if we formed in most other cities on the East Coast we'd probably play exclusively hardcore shows and not really punk shows. But in Pittsburgh I feel like we play more punk shows.

Scud: And the likelihood that some of us would be authentic hill people from the tristate area might not be as strong.

Jay: See, two of the members of this band have been fired from Burger King.

Scud [*to Nick*]: You too?



HELL TO PAY!!!

HELL TO PAY!!!

HELL TO PAY!!!

HELL TO PAY!!!

Nick: I was hired back and they tried to make me a manager.
Jay: I just think that the people who play punk music in New York City aren't necessarily the kinds of people who get fired from Burger King.
Flynn: Wait, can you put a little asterisk here and say that Nick is from the town where Groundhog Day [takes place]? And that Scud works in the third most radioactive town in America? And that I am his assistant there?
Jay: I think that Pittsburgh allows people a lot of personal freedom because the cost of living is so low…for now—
Flynn: Google's moving in.
Jay: —that we're able to practice and more or less go on tour if we want to, despite the fact that many people in the band work full-time jobs and are either married or essentially married, and three of them own houses…That's kind of weird. As an outsider, I think that it's important for the people outside of Pittsburgh to understand that Pittsburgh is ultimately part of Appalachia.
Flynn: It's the largest city in Appalachia.
Jay: Yeah, it's the Paris of Appalachia. And Appalachia doesn't get very well represented in the larger punk consciousness. So it is interesting being in a band with someone from West Virginia and two other guys from actual western Pennsylvania. It's a unique part of the world. So coming to experience their culture has been a…gift.

MRR: How is that local flavor expressed in Pittsburgh punk?
Adam: I lived in literal shit. My town smelled like manure in the summer. Like, it literally smelled like shit. So you get accustomed to shit.
Flynn: That's why Adam likes more music than he dislikes. But… How does it influence Pittsburgh punk? Half of all crusty punks work as contractors. They, like, hang dry wall. I feel like that's an unusual thing for a punk scene.

MRR: Do you have any other thoughts about what Pittsburgh is like as opposed to New York or anywhere else?
Jay: I mean, Pittsburgh is…even though it's in Pennsylvania, and ultimately not that far from other [major cities], it feels like you're kind of in the middle of nowhere. I mean, you leave the city and very quickly you are in the back woods.
Flynn: I grew up in DC and I think it's incredibly different, insofar as if I were in downtown DC, I'd have to drive at least an hour to get to, like, nowhere rural poverty. In Pittsburgh, you could be downtown and drive fifteen minutes or so and be in the country.
Jay: But it feels like its fifteen years ago, somehow, in a way that's hard to describe. You know, your friend moves and you check out their apartment and its wood paneling and brown carpet.
Nick: They've still got Mötley Crüe on the jukebox.
Jay: But at the same time, it's changing rapidly. Like many other cities in this country. And I doubt that character will survive another decade. [*long pause*]
Nick: You really nailed it right there. You a poet, dude?

MRR: Well, you may have noticed there's some buzz surrounding Concealed Blade. And of course your first show will go down in Pittsburgh music history for how wild and crazy it was.
Jay: I still think that our first show being so wild and crazy had a lot more to do with the context within which that show happened than with us, specifically.

MRR: Well, that may be true, but doesn't it add a certain mystique when there's that kind of, "Oh man, this band's first show, you shoulda been there" mythos?
Jay: I guess, sort of…
Adam: That was the wildest show I think I've ever played. In Pittsburgh, for sure. It was fucking crazy.
Flynn: We saw a million faces and we rocked them all. My friend Jon said it best.
Adam: It was an after-show for Raw Distractions. Raw Distractions had played earlier, and I had an after show with Mystic Inane, which was [Concealed Blade's] first show.
Jay: So, it happened late, and everyone was drunk. And it was a fucking Friday night or something.
Flynn: And we'd put the demo out like three months before …
Jay: …So if anyone had wanted to listen to it, they had probably listened to it by then. And so there were people who knew words to songs, which is crazy because I don't even know the *names* of the songs. A lot of people were throwing themselves around and Nick took his shirt off.
Scud: He looked like a deranged hill person

Flynn: A man named Slimer sort of half tackled me while I was playing.

Scud: And Adam got speared—it looked like that scene in *Back to the Future* where he turns on the amp and gets flung back except that he was going towards the amp.

Flynn: I think Nick lost his glasses. Just a whole lot of slammin' and sweatin' and slippin' and slidin.'

MRR: I just feel like having a debut like that must have given you some momentum you might not have if you'd had a more "standard" first show.

Adam: Yeah, all the bands I've been in, you have to work to build it up to that crazy show.

Flynn: Everything's just downhill from here for us. We're just going through the motions.

Jay: Now we just get handed everything in life.

Adam: I remember the second show wasn't as climactic.

Flynn: There was also that show at the Rock Room that we played for like three minutes before the power cut out.

Jay: I was like, "Yo, somebody go flip the breaker," and they said "We don't know where that is."

Flynn: But to answer your question, I think it was a great boost to us to have a crazy first show. It was awesome. And I feel like it solidified our unity position in Pittsburgh. Because it was a great show, attended and enjoyed by punks and 'cores and weird metal freaks. Everybody.

MRR: So are you guys just in denial of Concealed Blade hype?

Nick: I look for us on Tumblr all the time. And I don't see shit.

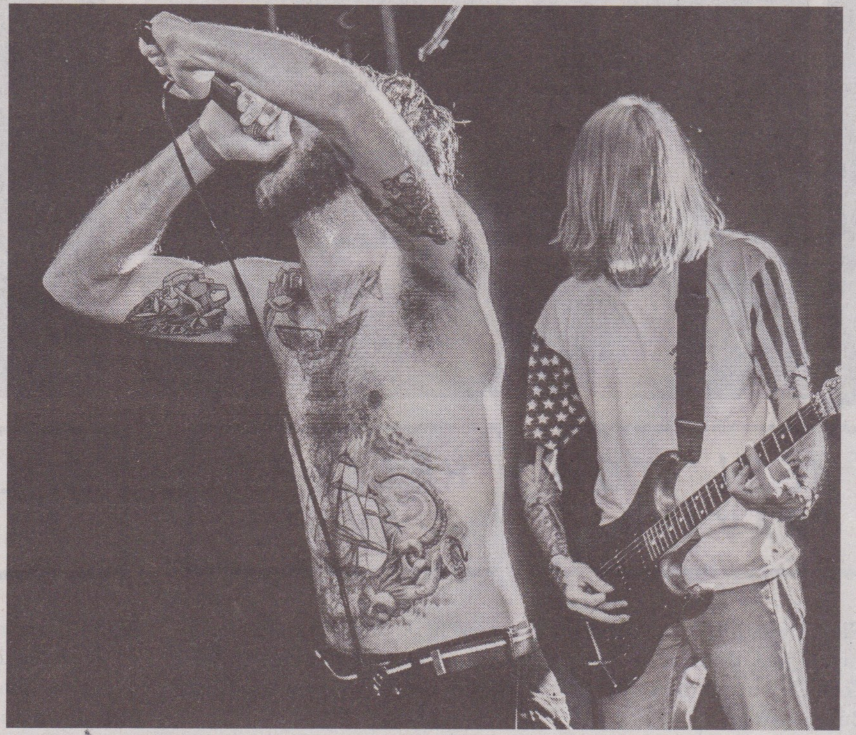
Flynn: I don't think we have the right branding.

MRR: I'm not really asking you to talk about hype in a self-promoting sort of way, I guess my question is more about your perception is of hype as a concept, which can seem especially strange and artificial in the internet age.

Flynn: Well, it's also hard because Pittsburgh is sort of like an island. And I don't know what the situation is outside of Pittsburgh.

MRR: But you're also all in other bands that are pretty popular.

Jay: I think that's the thing. When you've been playing music for a long time, and you've gone on tour—I mean, Hounds of Hate has toured all over North America and Europe. Adam has toured in bands for years and years, and he's also been booking shows in Pittsburgh for, what, eight years now? So, at this point, thinking about "Oh man, we have to go on tour and have people put on shows for us"… it's not something I worry about. I don't worry about it in relation to the quality of the music, and I don't not worry about it because of the quality of the music. It's just friend rock.



MRR: That definitely comes across—there's a very relaxed vibe to this band. I feel like part of Concealed Blade's appeal is that you're not trying to accomplish anything in particular.

Jay: Yeah, I think personally, I can't handle a big undertaking of a band. I don't have it in me the same way I used to when I was younger. I mean, Hounds of Hate, last year we released our LP and that was this huge project in a lot of ways. There were ups and downs and associated frustrations and then we went on a European tour that we booked ourselves, and then we went on a US tour. I think in 2014, Hounds of Hate was on the road maybe 150 days. It's a lot of work. And I don't have any interest in starting another band that tries to do that. So at this point, when someone says, "Can I put out a Concealed Blade record?" We're like, "Yes, absolutely. Go ahead." Because I just don't want to deal with it.

Flynn: I think a big part of the Concealed Blade mandate was just to be chill. Like, let's play local shows, let's have a band that at any point, any one of us could be like, "Hey, I'm going to be busy moving into a new house, so I don't want to do anything for three weeks." Or a band that can take a backseat to anything at any time and is very low commitment.

MRR: But yeah, it seems like the more chill you aim to be, the more people are into it. Assuming you're good to begin with, of course ...

Flynn: I've actually found that the less time you spend on songwriting, the more people like it. That's really the correlation I've found.

MRR: So, who does the songwriting in this band?

Flynn: We're actually a boy band that Dave Rosenstraus put together. I'm the young one.

Jay: Flynn writes most of the songs. I write the drum parts…

Scud: I just show up 15 minutes late and hope I can keep up.

Jay: There was a period of time in our band where somehow Nick Pilz got removed from the group text message and so we didn't talk to him for like … two months.

MRR: Talk about your lyrics a bit.

Flynn: They're mostly about typical hardcore frustrations and also punk ruining your life.

MRR: Flynn, you mentioned earlier that, as a band, it's kind of this tough guy, dumb hardcore thing ...

Flynn: I don't think I used the words "tough guy."

Scud: Flynn, don't discriminate against tough guys who spend a lot of time on their bodies.

MRR: Is there—do you get into a character of sorts when you're writing lyrics?

Flynn: I would certainly say that Pilz is a character. But yeah, sort of. I feel like we don't have songs that are, like…"I'm going to get you." They're more songs about hopelessness and frustration, not like, "I'm going to hulk out and beat some ass" kind of frustration.

MRR: But you're not being your normal…sophisticated self.

Flynn: Hey, one song is about Hobbs! It's certainly not terribly cerebral stuff, but I wouldn't say it's dishonest, either.

MRR: It's just tapping into that base frustration.

Adam: I feel like that's part of hardcore…I don't really know how to describe it, but you tap into something that's not really you.

Scud: Flynn knows really big words, but he knows when to keep it simple.

Flynn: You have to negotiate something that's relatable but still genuine to you with the kind of confines of genre. 'Cause you're not going to get too book-learny on *[sings Concealed Blade riff]*.

Scud: I can't wait to see how you type that part out.

Flynn: Slap a minidisc in with every copy of the zine.

MRR: I realize that intellectualizing things by asking a question like that might be missing the point of what you're doing with the lyrics.

Flynn: I feel like it's *not* missing the point to ask that question. Because a lot of times, people feel very committed to being like, "No, this hardcore band is totally legitimate and totally reflects how I feel." But that's just not true because I'm, like, a grown man in 2015. A genre started by street children in the '80s does not reflect me totally accurately, and to say otherwise would be a total fabrication.

Jay: Yeah, and it's also this thing that happens a lot of times especially with…when people listen to your music, of course they're going to create a context for it. And within punk, something I've witnessed is people are super obsessed with authenticity. And so, they really want to believe that everything they're seeing from a band is authentic. And the narratives that get created around bands are always really concerned with, like, "Oh, that band, their songs are super crazy, their singer is really crazy"…Or "Oh man, that band, I hear they're a bunch of sixteen-year-olds and they don't have the internet," or something like that. You know what I mean? These stories that get created about bands just don't reflect the reality at all. Because *everything* that happens within the realm of punk and hardcore is ultimately performance. And no performance is ever completely authentic.

Adam: That's exactly what I was trying to say.

Jay: So, you know, we have a song called "Fuck to Survive." I have no idea what the fuck it's about.

Flynn: It's about the hopelessness of existence and how sex is often used to fill that void.

Scud: It's one of the few songs I know the name of.

Jay: The point is that I'm not 100% invested in fucking as survival or something like that. But at the same time, I recognize it as something to do because you're bored. But that's not, like, all we're about, right?

MRR: The fact that a lot of that stuff is obviously somewhat performative, with humor behind it, is another part of the Concealed Blade appeal.

Jay: Yeah, I mean, you started off this line of questioning by talking about tough guy stuff. And first of all, it would be totally disingenuous for us to represent ourselves as tough guys.

Adam: Have you *seen* the way we look?

Jay: We are not going to fight anybody. [*pauses*] There are a few people I'd probably fight. But whatever. In 2015, it would be ridiculous and just stupid to try to focus a band around masculine aggression.

Adam: Hardcore is always relatable to me because I'm a fucking idiot. That's all I have to say.

MRR: What's next for Concealed Blade? Any tours lined up? Releases in the works?

Flynn: We're probably going to talk about writing a record for the next year and a half,

Scud: [*incredulous*] Flynn already has a record written

Jay: We tried to write some new songs last night, but then the power went out

Flynn: It was the second time at a Concealed Blade practice where that's happened.

Jay: We'll probably play some shows in Pittsburgh, and maybe if we get our act together we might go to Europe for between five and seventy days. Depending on whose vision of the tour it is. And then, you know, in due time, we'll peter out.

Flynn: A record, West Coast, Euroland, peter.

concealedblade.bandcamp.com

UROCHROMES UROCHROMES

I first met Jackie "The Great White Turtlenecked Hope" at a Hy-Vee in New Ulm, MN, while I browsed an array of hardened fried chicken behind the smudged and tinted glass of the hot foods section. While I rubbed my temples in confusion, I looked to my right and saw a young man wearing sunglasses grimacing intently. He was mumbling to himself and holding an armful of grapefruits. He dropped two of them and his mutters increased in volume until he was suddenly screaming maniacally. I stood, pretending to be entranced by crispy dark and light meats, and watched as this peculiar man was escorted out of the relatively conservative grocery store.

After buying a convincingly priced assortment of poorly fried poultry, I exited the store and saw the grimacing wonder sitting on the bench and frantically punching away on a flip phone. His associate, who would later be revealed as his Urochromes co-conspirator, Dick Riddick, sat next to him. Noticing that both of them had ripped jeans, I asked them if they were into Nirvana. Riddick said nothing. Jackie sighed deeply and produced a Urochromes tape from a pocket covertly located inside of his turtleneck sweater.

Feeling unwelcome,
I shoved the tape in the side pocket of my Kikwear trousers and skated off.

Fast forward seventeen years and I'm doing an interview with them for MRR. A lot has changed, but one thing that hasn't is Urochromes' dedication to the underground punkmetalhardcorefreak scene. After their upcoming appearances at Berserktown Fest in Los Angeles, Cleveland's Horrible Fest, and their plans to release both a 12" on Feeding Tube Records (including live recordings featuring Denny McDermott and Frank Hurricane) and a 12" split on Jeth-Row Records, I wouldn't be surprised if the guys in Nirvana start asking their friends if they're into Urochromes!

Interview and introduction by Drew Ailes. Photos by Steven Ruud. Lettering by Shitboy Face.

UROCHROMES

MRR: What is Urochromes, other than things that color urine?

Jackie Boy: First off, Urochromes has nothing to do with urine. Urochromes is a reference to the song "Rock and Roll, Hoochie Koo," recorded by Johnny Winter in 1970 with his band, "Johnny Winter And." According to Rick Derringer, "The first song I wrote for Johnny was 'Rock and Roll, Hoochie Koo.' 'Rock and Roll' to satisfy the rock'n'roll that I was supposed to be bringing into the picture, and 'Hoochie Koo' to satisfy the king of blues sensibility that Johnny was supposed to maintain. And it worked out great (Wikipedia)." I liked the sound of this and I wanted to incorporate similar ideas into my own band. I remembered that there is a chemical compound with the formula "HOOCH-COOH." That chemical is the Urobilin, or Urochrome. That's how we got our name.

MRR: How many members are there in Urochromes? I have seen Dick and Jackie appear regularly, but there always appears to be an elusive third member somewhere.

Jackie Boy: Urochromes is just the two of us, but there is a large cast of rotating additional members, including the Meerkat, Sippy Cup, Outhouse, El Detestado, DJ Khaleb, White Meyer, and Dump Betty.

MRR: Jackie, your stage presence has been compared to hardcore greats such as Gilbert Gottfried and Ed Grimley—are these comparisons fuel for the fire, or is it hard to measure up to these impossible standards?

Jackie Boy: Fuel, absolutely. Gottfried is a great performer and I accept any and all comparisons with pride. His set at the Gathering of the Juggalos a few years ago is one of the best videos on the net. I hope one day I stare at the sun long enough that I start to look like him too.

MRR: I have heard there is some potential involvement in two other strange outfits—one called "Sediment Club" and another called "Neutral Fixation II": can you confirm or deny these allegations? Are there other projects related to Jerky Jackie and Tricky Dickie?

Jackie Boy: Yes, I've been playing in Sediment Club for ten years. I can confirm the allegation. Neutral Fixation II is a little fresher. Hopefully this guy Drew puts out our record. Dick and I also play together in Cheri Love, Cheri Love 2000 AD, and Digital Manure.

UROCHROMES!?!

MRR: Where can people hear these other side projects such as Cheri Love and Digital Manure?
Jackie Boy: Cheri Love tape was recently released through Eat The Life and we'll have some copies on tour as well. Digital Manure is self-released and it will be the first release from the "Trapped on a Planet" distro.

MRR: What are some of your favorite ways to score free food, either at home or on the road?
Jackie Boy: The last time I was employed it was as a caterer for Amherst College. They have a weekly Shrimp Scampi luncheon that is to die for. On the road we are big fans of the "free Chipotle for touring bands" thing. It's especially easy to get right now because of the E. Coli issues they had. They're desperate for good reviews. Anybody who tells you that the Chipotle thing doesn't work anymore never learned how to properly kiss an ass.

MRR: Let's play into a little hypothetical situation patterned after a real-time example: what if attendees of Urochromes shows contracted cases of E. coli? While Chipotle is working hard to earn back brand loyalty and customer trust by offering incentives such as free burritos, how would Urochromes rebuild the trust of your fans (affectionately called "Urochromaniacs")?
Jackie Boy: As long as 2016 continues to be the slime-time of alternative music, I think that E. Coli breakouts would help our image and make us more popular. The first fifty copies of our tape came with small vials of a unique urine-gatorade hybrid, so really we've been relying on the threat of disease breakout as a marketing plan since the start.

MRR: Musically, is Slipknot a good band?
Jackie Boy: There's a prominent member of Anonymous in the UK named "Slipknot P Harrington." He is a leading voice in Anonymous' extremist anti-global warming movement AKA "global cooling" or "global norming." He famously hacked Al Gore's phone so that every time he types "I love you too" it is autocorrected to "I am a lying, carbon-guzzling pig."

MRR: While the brilliance of Urochromes is likely evident to cultured city-folk such as myself, what sort of things do you hear from people in the smaller towns you have been forced to play?
Jackie Boy: We played once in the quaint town of Greenfield, Massachusetts. We shared the bill with a nice man named Frank Hurricaine who said we were "tighter than a shrimp's ass."

MRR: What sort of foods give you stomach aches and why?
Jackie Boy: Shrimp scampi, because you've never had enough until you've had too much.

MRR: If you had to be trapped in one national chain for three days like that movie where the dude hangs out in Target with Jennifer Connelly, what store would it be?
Dick Riddick: The soiled jockstrap bin at Planet Fitness. "If you can't be an athlete, be an athletic supporter."

MRR: What is the last band you saw where you could not tell if you loved or hated them?
Jackie Boy: My dad talks about seeing the Ramones when he was sixteen or so and only listening to Cream, Led Zeppelin, the Who, etc. He said when he saw the Ramones he had no idea anyone ever played that fast, but also had no idea why anyone would. I don't know if this experience is really possible anymore—too much saturation of stuff. We did play with a duo called Splatter in Pensacola. It was a mother/son duo. They played for over an hour and were really nice people and had some great songs and had one song that ripped off Upsidedown Cross in a way I didn't really like. I think that's as close as it gets.
Dick Riddick: My affect is more blunted than a wigger with melanoma, so I rarely have any feeling any which way about nothing....so all of the above.

MRR: Jackie, I'll ask you as you're the one that made me realize how great they are, but why precisely do you like Cruelster from Cleveland so much? Do you like Perverts Again just as much?
Jackie Boy: Cruelster, Cruelster, Cruelster. They drove directly from Cleveland to play a show for about 20 people in Greenfield, Massachusetts. They ended their set with a special Dropkick Murphy's cover for the occasion, which nobody recognized, including myself. I asked them where they were playing the next night. They said they had to drive back to Cleveland that night and kept making jokes about someone's girlfriend being ten months pregnant. We ate some toast at the Whately Diner and they were on their way. A few days later God gave Nathan and his partner a beautiful baby boy.

Perverts Again are almost as good and have the best little mascot of any band I've ever seen.

MRR: Tell us about your current tour. What are your favorite gas stations? What is one thing you brought on your current tour that you wished you did not bring?
Jackie Boy: Our tour is great! We've played popular shows and been received well and questioned the substance of our friendships. We love Sheetz, Wawa, and Circle K. I wish we hadn't brought our emotional baggage.

MRR: Are you going to tour more?
Jackie Boy: Yessir, May 26th through June 18th, 2016. Last Try's A Charm.

MRR: Lately the punk community has been afire with talk on a very controversial and dynamic issue affecting us all: global warming. Has there been any talk in the band of replacing your electronic drummer in light that we've now hit the 400ppm carbon dioxide mark?
Jackie Boy: We've replaced the electronic drummer a few times and will continue to occasionally do so in the future. We're doing our part. What about you, Mr. R? What about your "carbon bootprint"?

MRR: What sort of debilitating illness are you hoping to die from in the next 30 years? Do you have concerns about Massachusettes becoming a malarial area?
Jackie Boy: It seems like you guys are trying to make the transition from slime/potty-humor culture to disease awareness culture. That's a good idea. After all the shit's been flushed away, we will be left with the unsanitized bowl and someone's going to have to deal with that.

MRR: Are tight pants necessary to be a "punker" or are we all potentially harming our genitals and gastrointestinal systems for no real reason?
Jackie Boy: I wear Dickies and Dick wears slim but comfortable.

MRR: Has anyone ever referred to anyone in the band as being a pervert?
Jackie Boy: Yeah, but she's not in the band anymore.

MRR: Compare and contrast: confronting with honesty versus reacting with dignity?
Dick Riddick: "The worst offense is intelligence, the best defense is belligerence"—my dad.

MRR: Should I stay in college?
Jackie Boy: OK.

MRR: Thanks.

UROCHROMES

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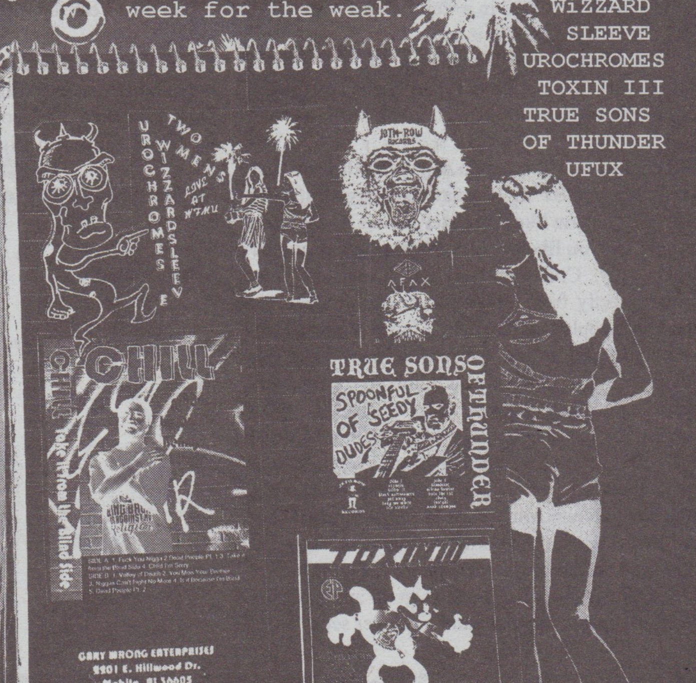
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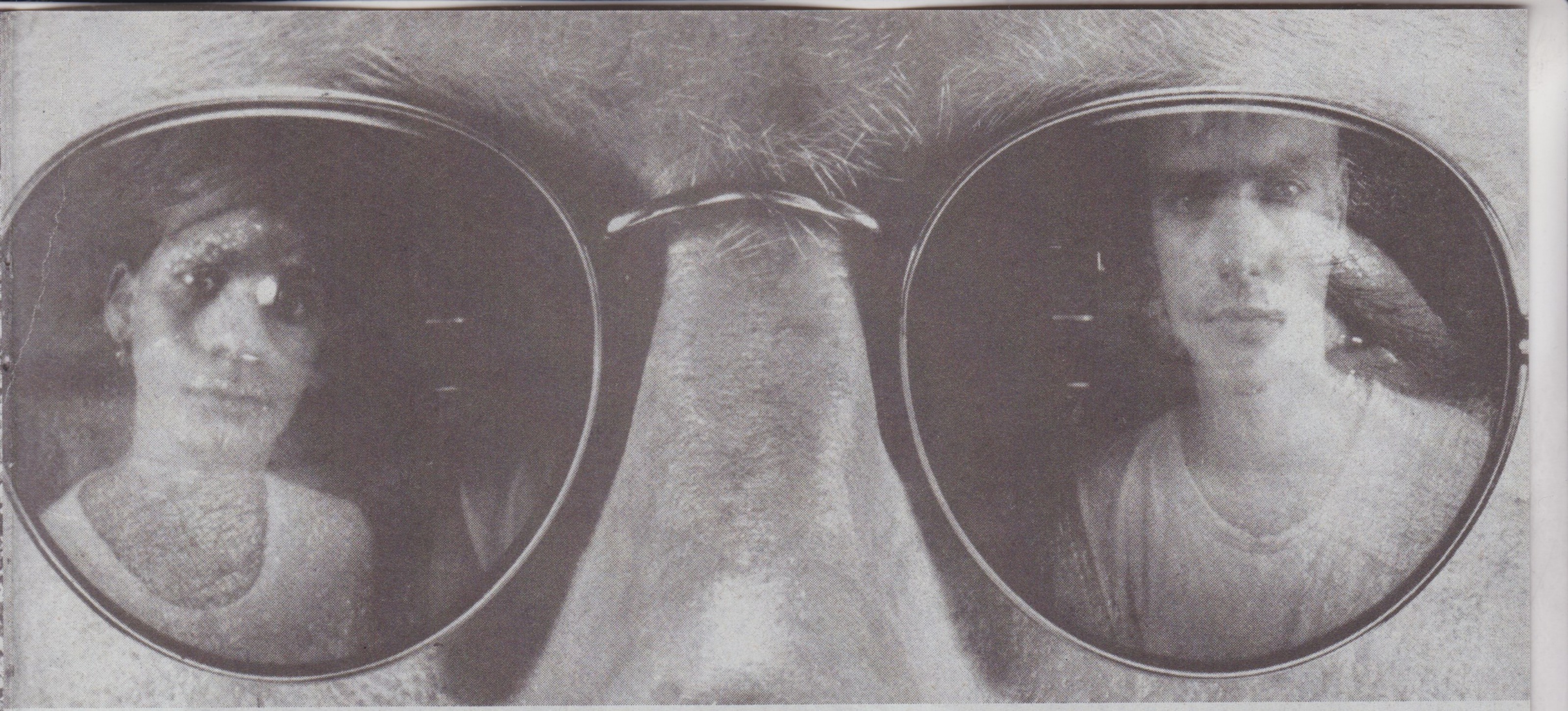


NEWTOWN NEUROTICS

When word got out that Newton Neurotics were playing two shows in the Bay Area for Manic Relapse Fest, everyone kept telling me "You should interview them!" Always one of the most unique bands in punk, touching the hearts of punks of many ilk, the Newtown Neurotics were last interviewed in MRR in 1987! I was hesitant, as I have no connection to the band other than being a super-fan, but once I was given Steve's email address, we figured we'd give it a go.

There's always a risk when digging into the mind of a first-wave punker—will they be jaded and disappointing? Will they have forgotten what they stood for? Will they dismiss their yearning brightness as frivolous youthful idealism? A couple batches of questions and answers confirmed that the Neurotics' Steve Drewett is still as thoughtful and inspiring as their music has always conveyed.

Interview and introduction by Julia Booz and Matt Badenhop. Photos by Christian Fallon, Tony Mottram, and Colectivo Desobediencia Sonara.

MRR: Do you think Newtown Neurotics are still relevant in 2016? There is definitely interest in your music now, seeing as how your records are being reissued and you're being asked to play abroad. Did you intend for your music to have this kind of longevity, or was it more for the moment?

Originally, we were doing it because it was fun. I had always wanted to play guitar and write songs, and punk enabled me to do exactly that. At the time I never dreamed it would take me around the world and deliver such rich life experiences. I guess I started out in a youthful way of wanting to be famous but eventually realized that the riches music delivered were not necessarily through money and could be just as satisfying, if not more so.

Regarding relevancy, I think that the most obvious indicator to this is that the audiences are there for us all these years later. The lyrics have not become out of date because many of the concerns that they addressed are still relevant to this day and some of those lyrics predicted where we would be now if we did not address those concerns back in the '80s.

In 1988, I walked away from the Neurotics and a couple of years later I gave up playing altogether. Seventeen years later, it was the audience interest in the group (among some other reasons) that made me go back to the band. Simon and I are the remaining surviving members of the Neurotics and we are enjoying the band's renaissance in an even more fulfilling way than back in the '80s.

Rock'n'roll was born in a pop world that dealt in fads, musical trends, gimmicks, and marketing cycles. Everything in pop or rock seemed to be short term because teenagers appeared to be fickle. Once sales dipped and the records were no longer stocked (as the artist was deemed to be no longer popular), the band or artist was considered no longer relevant. Exit band or artist.

What happened next was as the rock'n'roll generation aged, they were expected to not be interested in new/current music and young people were not expected to be interested in music that had gone before. Now, with the coming of the internet, music has become timeless because a band's output is always in stock, or metaphorically so via streaming. The other advantage is that now the market is global for all.

So, an artist's career can span many years, with continued interest from old fans and yet with new fans becoming engaged all the time because of the "long tail" of Internet supplied product. If the material still engages people, then the band can be relevant until they are no longer able to play anymore, and the music can still live after the band no longer does.

MRR: What bands were you influenced by at the time? Obviously the Ramones…

We were enthralled by the Ramones because it was them that showed us that

not only was punk easy to get up and play but also how easy it was to make a new type of pop, pop for people who hated pop, pop that was rock. Rock up to this point had turned its back on the simplicity that made it as powerful as was in the early days and bloated it out, via "smoke and mirrors" and instrumental aerobatics, declaring it only playable by super instrumentalists. These artists were declaring "simple rock'n'roll" as undesirable and passé.

The Ramones kicked this idea to the curb. The Sex Pistols we loved because of Johnny Rotten's attitude, and the Clash we viewed with love and hate. The Jam did not enthuse us much as people think, but we did like the energy.

MRR: The Neurotics haven't released new material since the late '80s. How frequently have you played since then? Have you played much outside the UK since then?

You are right, we have not released any new songs, but I wrote an album of new material for a band I formed after the Neurotics, the Indestructible Beat (which I plan to finally release this year), and more recently I released my first solo album, Kujenga Society.

When the Newtown Neurotics reformed in 2005, it was to play our existing material to fans who had got into the band after we had split so that they could hear the songs live for the first time, and of course to the fans who may have seen us before but wanted to hear this stuff again. Now after doing this for a number of years, I am planning to write some new material for the Neurotics. Its early days for that, but let's see what happens by next year.

We are very picky about where and when we play and keep our appearances down to a handful of gigs a year. Having said that, since 2006 we have been back to Germany and Belgium and for the first time, played Venice, Northern and Southern Ireland and Madrid, Spain. We of course play selective

KICK OUT!
KICK OUT!
KICK OUT!
KICK OUT THE TORIES!

gigs in the UK, including many appearances at the mighty Rebellion festival, each year.

On top of that, I have played with pick-up bands as the Neurotics in Brooklyn in 2010 and in Brazil in 2014.

MRR: What made you consider writing new Neurotics material? Is it just that the activity and interest in the band has reignited the spark? Are there new issues you want to address or new things you want to express lyrically?

Don't forget, I have been writing anyway, like in 2014 I released Kujenga Society, and yes, with that there have been issues that I wanted to express. It is difficult with the Neurotics, though, because people will always want to hear the old stuff live, [so] there will never be a lot of room for anything new. But we were enjoying playing so much that I started thinking that it could be a good idea to create some new material for the Neurotics. So I am working on it now, in a sort of stop/start fashion.

MRR: What other musical projects have you guys done?

[The Indestructible Beat was a band] that was formed with an idea to create music that was a cross breed of punk with rhythms more commonly heard in African music. In my mind, if it was possible for the Pogues to do a cross breed of punk and traditional Irish music, then why not punk and African music? I succeeded and we created an album's worth of material of which I am very proud. We may not have made much of an impact at the time, but creatively it is some of my best work. I am dying to get this stuff released this year. The band lasted around two years and then I pulled the plug on it. For a while it was an eight-piece and was such a large group to manage and to tour that I feared that I might kill myself with the workload. Eventually I realized that I had burned myself out and that was when I gave up music (for seventeen years). Then I focused on writing the Kujenga Society album, which helped me get a much sought after (by everyone) gig at the legendary Glastonbury Festival in 2015.

After the Neurotics, Simon played in a number of bands including the Tender Trap and Gaffa Hexam (both with a brilliant and underrated songwriter, Paul Howard) and in the Liberty Cage, an offshoot from the Men They Couldn't Hang. Like me, he then gave up music for many years.

MRR: Big fans and friends/family of the band were very sad to hear of the passing of bassist Colin Dredd last year. Can you tell the readers about him and how he died? Did you consider not playing again after his passing, or do you think he would prefer you kept playing?

First of allm there is a misconception here: Colin was not a member of the Newtown Neurotics when he died. He had not played fully in the band since 1988. He left because of ill health and a feeling that he would like to leave while we were at a high point in our career, rather than a low. It was Simon and I that decided, eventually, that without Colin, we would not continue. In 2005-06, Simon and I started playing again as the Newtown Neurotics using a bass player (Don Adams) that Simon had experience of previously, having played with him in Gaffa Hexam and the Liberty Cage.

What we did with these gigs was to ask Colin up to make a cameo/guest appearance at each one, where he performed two easy to play numbers, my song "Hypocrite" and the Ramones "Blitzkrieg Bop." They had to be easy because he had not played any bass since 1988 and had no part in any of our rehearsals. This was a level of commitment that he was comfortable with, since his stamina and vocal range were not as good as they used to be.

So we effectively took him with us on all our dates until around 2009 as a hand over to the new line-up, and then struck out on our own without him from 2009 onwards.

When Colin died in 2015, we already had had a bass player (Adam Smith) in place since 2007. During the gigs we did with Colin from 2005, he got to both play with us and to be in the audience to watch our set in full flight and he loved every minute of it. I am therefore happy to say that he gave the new line-up his utmost blessing.

In the past, he suffered from acute asthma and occasional bouts of pleurisy, which at one point nearly prevented us from going on a large European tour. We saved it at the last minute by bringing in a replacement bass player (Mac) who learned thirty of our songs in three days.

Unknown to us was that Colin also suffered from some intestinal/gut problems that, although they were only a nuisance then (and therefore we knew nothing of them), became increasingly worse over the years. Among other things he suffered from (he started getting "old persons" diseases because he had spent his life on unemployment benefits, and due to lack of money, ate very poorly) was diverticulitis (a very nasty condition) in which he started throwing up his own shit.

This was controlled by medication for a while, but in the end it could not be held back and he went into hospital with acute poisoning from harmful bacteria being where it shouldn't be.

Finally, when medication failed to stem the infection, the doctors decided that the only way to save his life was to remove a section of Colin's colon (this was perforated, it was discovered). The operation was conducted with an understanding that there was only a 40% chance of survival. Colin survived the operation, but the septic shock was too great for him, and a few days later he died. I spent his last night with him, I said goodbye to him in the morning, and as I left, he waved farewell. Two hours later, he passed away.

MRR: Was the song "Hypocrite" about the Anarchist movement of the time? Did you play with bands like Crass and Poison Girls? Did you feel any ideological connection to them?

"Hypocrite" was about a guy in a rival band to the Neurotics and not about the anarchist movement at all. We did some early gigs with Crass, Poison Girls, and Flux of Pink Indians/Epileptics. We all did benefit fundraisers for many of the same causes and were united in our opposition to the Tories. Our differences were that *we* wanted to change the system and *they* wanted to smash it. The Neurotics never wanted to expend their energies fighting anarchists and anarchist bands when the Tories were the real enemy. So we got along fine.

MRR: Regarding the song "Agony," were any of your contemporaries writing about or talking about the burden of masculinity at gigs?

No, they were not. But gender politics were making some waves at the time. We played with a lot of gay and feminist performers in the '80s, and although there were plenty of discussions about issues around sexuality and gender, with the heterosexual hegemony taking a lot of flack, quite rightly so, I felt that some exploration of the male ego and the violence that comes from it was needed, particularly from a male heterosexual. This was what punk was for, confronting the status quo.

MRR: What about "No Respect"? Did you ever get pushback from women for your anti-sexist lyrics? How did sexism enter your political awareness?

We got criticized by all sides. We were made fun of in the music press for being unmanly and occasionally lambasted by feminists for singing about sexism too aggressively (The implication was, I suppose, that we could only sing about sexism if we were a shoegazing band). Anyway, neither side showed themselves at their best, but they were exceptions rather than the rule, I would like to think. All these years on, we are proud to have stuck our heads above the parapet and started a discussion; this again was what punk was always supposed to be about.

Sexism entered our political awareness for a very good reason. If we are to believe in equality, then that has to extend to all, regardless of gender, race, or religion, otherwise you believe in nothing of the sort.

MRR: Who is the song "Screaming" about?

Screaming is about the death of John Lennon. He was the man who influenced me to pick up the guitar. He was the man who taught me to question those who pretend to rule me. He was the man who put both politics and personal politics into music. I grew up with his and the Beatles music, and I loved them.

When he died, I prayed that if there was a god, that John Lennon's talent could be transferred to me so that I could carry on his work and that I would immediately be able to play and compose with his talent and technique. It didn't work, so I was left to try and muddle through with my own humble talents.

MRR: Who is a political figure that has inspired your political awakening? Has anyone in particular influenced your political consciousness most?

Tony Benn (British Socialist MP now deceased) has influenced me the most politically. If for nothing else than for the following…

Five questions to ask the powerful:

1. What power have you got?
2. Where did you get it from?
3. In whose interests do you exercise it?
4. To whom are you accountable?
5. How can we get rid of you?

Only Democracy gives us that right. That is why no one with power likes democracy and that is why every generation must struggle to win it and keep it—including you and me, here and now.

MRR: What do you do for work? How much time have you spent "living with unemployment?"

As a writer who creates storylines about situations they have not experienced themselves, but make it feel like they are the person or persons mentioned in the narrative, I have done the same with my music. I have not experienced unemployment myself, apart from a brief spell when I first left school. However, all my friends have suffered long periods without work, including the other founding members of the Newtown Neurotics, Simon and Colin, who were both unemployed throughout the '80s. It was really, really hard at times for me to both work and tour, but I kept the band going like this for ten years up until the original split in 1988. I was still working when we reformed the band in 2005, but in 2014 I was made redundant and I decided to retire. Now, if anything, I am a full-time musician, living with no employment.

MRR: I've never seen a photo of you without the sunglasses. Why?

Because I never take them off. My eyes do not like strong light, so I need shades to make them feel comfortable. They have prescription lenses in them—bi-focal, in fact.

That is also true for stage lights, and I am also too easily distracted by the audience when I should be concentrating on playing, and being a three piece it is really noticable if I go off on a tangent. Once I start playing, sweat pours down my face onto the inside of the lenses and into my eyes and then I can't see past the first row anyway.

MRR: I once read in an interview with Attila the Stockbroker that you went to play in North Korea? When and how did that come about? What was it like? Surely you're the only punk rocker that's ever played there!

Yes, that is true, and I am the only punk rocker to have played North Korea.

It was 1989 and I was offered the gig of playing the World Festival of Youth and Students. This opportunity arose when the gig was originally offered to Attila the Stockbroker but he was already committed to a tour (of Canada I believe) and so he recommended me. The festival was a weeklong affair, but the North Koreans had to fly participants in from all over the world, so it took a week to get them all there, and after the festival had finished, a week to get them all back. I was among the first of the countries to arrive and then ended up being one of the last to leave, so I hung out in Pyong Yang for three weeks on my own (Well, not on my own, as there were other people from Britain there, but I didn't have a lot in common with them, so I made my own amusements).

It was really good, it was really friendly and easy going. There was no feeling of authoritarian oversight and I wandered around Pyong Yang day and night without anyone caring or following me or anything like that. But the way the people interacted with their government and government officials told a different story. Some of them seemed genuinely scared to talk to me, and yet others were really relaxed.

They saw so little of the outside world that I think some of them just didn't know what to make of us. My performances went down so well there, too. It is true that the people attending the gigs may have actually been told they must go by their local officials, *but* when you haven't seen anyone other than your own country folk for all of your life, an instruction to attend a big "World Music" festival would be like pushing at an open door, I think. They loved it and were so warm and friendly.

I learnt some Korean, which I spoke on stage, i.e. "thank you very, very much" and "the next song is" (no, I cannot write the Korean for those phrases!), that kind of stuff. On one occasion the audience was so astonished that I spoke a bit of their own language that the collective gasp from a couple of thousand people was like an inhalation that sucked all of the oxygen out of the room for a moment. It was astounding! I recorded the gig on a Walkman that evening, and even to this day I cannot believe the sound that they made. Truly an off the scale experience.

MRR: Wow! Do you recall what songs you played? Were you solo, or did you

MINDLESS!
MINDLESS!
MINDLESS!
MINDLESS VIOLENCE!

have a backing band? Why did they invite Attila? Do you still have the recording you made of that performance? Any chance of releasing it? I think people would love to hear that.

While I was there, I performed a number of Neurotics, Drewett, and cover songs. I was solo, I had just split up the Indestructible Beat and was considering giving up music. The chance of playing Pyong Yang was a tremendous challenge for me, as I was not used to playing solo. At that time, it was not something I was comfortable doing. I had set myself up to do something completely out of my comfort zone in a strange land on the other side of the world on my own. As it turned out, it was fantastic!

I did the same sort of "dropping out of my comfort zone" thing in 2015 when I went over to Brazil to play Neurotics songs with a Brazilian pick-up band I had never met. I had just turned 60 years of age and I took off on my own, which included playing in one of the most violent cities (outside of warzones) in the world, São Paulo. That also turned out to be fantastic.

Attila got invited to play North Korea at the February 1989 Political Song festival in East Berlin DDR after some representatives from North Korea saw him perform. As I said, he was already committed to playing Canada, so couldn't do it—instead he recommended me.

Yeah, I still have the recording, and yeah, I might well release it one day—it is certainly unusual. I intend to write about it, too, at some point, so maybe they could go together.

MRR: You were very active in the anti-apartheid movement. Tell us about what turned you onto it, how you felt connected to it, and what you think about those tactics now. Can any of those strategies be implemented in the fight against police brutality of people of color?

International Solidarity is the element that helped bring the Apartheid regime to an end, and that collectivity can continue to be used to make the world a better place. Solidarity as a whole is such a powerful force that the powerful want us to think is a waste of time.

I think it is such a great feeling that you get from fighting for a cause that you know is right, and with the Anti-Apartheid movement you could feel the power of a global movement bearing down on the unbearable. The greatest battle is the battle of ideas. Media ownership is of course crucial to that, but there are so many other ways to get information across now, and the global banking crisis has brought people's attention to how crooked and creaking the whole capitalist idea of national and international banking is. With that and the threat of our reliance on carbon generating fuel supplies, which is choking the life out of life, we have plenty more challenges for international solidarity in the future. If global finance is a problem, if global warming is a problem, then we need global solidarity if we are going to survive on this planet

Regarding racism and police racism specifically, this is endemic, but the way that ordinary people are viewed and treated by their government, the forced surrendering of their rights to accommodate the obscene profits of big business, the criminality of the banks, etc., is encouraging brutality and violence in everyday life, and that slide towards inhumanity is felt most acutely by people of color. But none of the poor, regardless of their ethnic background, are immune to the imposition of the boot, baton, and gun. The poor vastly outnumber the rich and between the two are the police. They are there to protect the wealthy elite and therefore they think they have a mandate to do anything they please. The police can only be successfully humanized when society itself is humanized. When society itself is more equal.

MRR: What should the people of the UK do in response to the current refugee crisis?

We should respond humanely and give these people safe haven and support. All of Europe should do the same (and for the most part are), and we should be taking in a quota that is representative of the population of the host nation (The British Government at present is responding to this crisis shamefully, with piecemeal numbers allowed in). Britain and America should actually take the lead on this to make amends for undertaking an illegal war in the Middle East. They smashed the civic infrastructure of Iraq and then sacked the army—those soldiers then became militants and the ensuing civil war left a vacuum for Al Qaeda to get a hold in the country. That vacuum also led to the creation of Isis. Now *we* have created a weapon of mass destruction. The involvement of Britain, America, and Russia, who, once the Arab Spring got underway started fighting a war of proxy in North Africa, has helped to create a humanitarian crisis that is unparalleled in recent history. Bombing mostly innocent people from miles above the ground is only going to make things worse. Politics of the worst kind created this crisis and the only way to solve it is with politics of the best kind. But it's hard because it's like trying to put a genie back into the bottle, but it is not impossible, it mustn't be. This crisis will be a poison to our liberal ideology if we turn away these victims of terror. If you talk the talk, you need to walk the walk, and now is the time to show our humanity, not turn our backs on it.

MRR: What's your relationship to punk these days? Do you ever go to gigs? Are there any current bands that you like? What are some older punk bands that stand the test of time to you?

Yeah, I still go to gigs from time to time, but things are much the same as the old days, and that is I mostly get to see other bands at the dates we play ourselves. Nearly every year we play the massive and legendary Rebellion Festival in Blackpoolm, and here punk groups from all over the world come to play, so I get to reconnect with older bands and see something new every time.

Having toured Brazil in 2014, I am very partial to Brazilian punk because Brazil is the most punk country I have ever visited. People should check out the stuff that comes out of this part of the world because it is really good. A couple of my favorites are Juventude Maltida and the Squintz. Favorites from other countries include, from Scandinavia, Small Town, and from the States, the Strike, Cranked Up, and the Muffs. I love the Muffs. From Britain I love the Buzzcocks, who deliver a great back catalog and new material (that is a lesson for us to take note of), Ruts DC, the Damned, Bleech, the Members, Hard Fi, and Attila the Stockbroker's Barnstormer, amongst others.

neurotics.org.uk

LIME CRUSH

Lime Crush are an ecstatic, clattering punk explosion, freedom and "fuck you" rolled into one. Surely the soundtrack to all insurrectionary girl gang meetings in their hometown of Vienna, Austria, their Graveyard EP was a favorite around the MRR compound (site of insurrectionary girl gang meetings 100% of the time).

Introduction by Grace Ambrose
Interview by Viktor Vargyai.

MRR: What was the moment that you decided for yourself that you would be a punk or when you realized you already were one?

Andi Dvořák: I often refer to things as being Punk. Sometimes it is the gut feeling, the let go—the idea of just doing things without thinking too long about how they actually should be done. This and a certain amount of awareness and confrontation that I learned at punk shows. Yet the labeling can be very misleading and even become your own obstacle. Ideas tend to take you in many directions.

Veronika Eberhart: It took me a while to really identify with the term punk. In my teens, media mainly transferred punk as a fashion style, like a special haircut and some men in leather jackets standing on stage. Not that I didn't like the style, but I was listening to bands like the Lassie Singers (a band from Hamburg) or Salt 'n' Pepa, so these things weren't connected for me at all. It was years later, in my twenties, when I discovered bands like the Minutemen, Oma Hans, and Beat Happening, and their use of that expression as an approach to doing things. Mixed with the Ladyfests that happened in Vienna at that time, I finally could see that all I am doing is totally punk and that this is really appropriate to my life and how I was doing music.

Nicoletta Hernández: I wasn't really involved with kids that had matching interests, so I was seeking people I could identify with, mainly female musicians. All of them were punk in a way—which to me means passing the norm and doing things the way you feel like.

MRR: Point out the major stations on your musical journey to the present.

Nicoletta: I always wanted to make music and play instruments, like for as long as I can remember, and then I wanted to play in a feminist band. Both of those ideas somehow led to the point where I am right now.

Veronika: Mmhm—for example, I always wanted to play drums as a kid, but certain circumstances—or let's name it patriarchal structures—prevented me from doing that. So for me it was a major step when two friends of mine (Alena and Julia) and me started the punk band Ilsebill. We bought this cheap drumset and just started banging wildly on it. At our first show we didn't even know that you need an amp for an electric guitar 'cause in the rehearsing room we just put it in the mixing desk. You can imagine the sound engineers' faces. We had no clue at all how to play the instruments the "right" way, and that was also the real great part about discovering music and technique together as three girls who just had something to say and were in love with music. We switched instruments all the time because we wanted to learn them all and I personally felt a lot of self-empowerment being on stage with them and quoting the words of groups like the Situationist International. Later Alena moved to the UK and Julia and me remained as Plaided. We did a lot of shows in Europe and some in the US; released a single and an album on Andi's label, Fettkakao, and continued to switch our instruments. Then Julia also decided to stop playing 'cause she wanted to concentrate on her woodwork. That was a total bummer for me 'cause it was very special to play with her. But when the shock wore off, I started to do some scores for movies and a solo project called Tirana and then finally Lime Crush came along. It feels really great to play in this band. I am not that free with instruments anymore, and actually really like to improve my skills in drumming, but the whole experience with my first band also inspired me to help organize some Rock Camps for Girls in Austria. So I had the opportunity to share this approach with others (as far as you can do in such structures).

MRR: Vienna is the second most livable city in the world and it counts among its past residents Beethoven, Mozart, Freud, Zweig, Wittgenstein, Haneke, and now you who are taking over the punk world with your music. What's in the water there? Doesn't a punk band need a collapsing city that is soaked into confusion and cultural bleakness of the mainstream so they have to create their version of a better world? Where could we catch living in Vienna in your sound?

Andi: You can have an over-administrated city that drives you crazy as well. Whenever we visit Budapest with friends from outside this area, at some point the comparison between the two cities comes up, and almost everyone agrees on Budapest as more beautiful. I believe this derives from its not too tidy image. The more you administrate and take care of a place, the more you are controlling it and the less playful it becomes.

Unfortunately, there is a lot that makes us angry. Patriarchy, post-Nazi times, current European politics toward asylum seekers, poverty and the economic gap that gets bigger with each moment. It is hard to not get upset.

Veronika: Well, you have to keep in mind that Nazism and their fascism destroyed progressive cultural life and tried to get rid of most intellectual heritage during the Second World War. A lot of things that remained after the war were wrapped in a reactionary fog, which you still encounter in some parts of Austria. For example, Hanns Eisler, who is one of my favorite composers, was forced into exile. He is rarely thought of when people speak about Austrian musical heritage. But speaking of the sound I want to create, he is one of my dearest role models. His compositions are so direct and energetic and transfer such a will to fight against social inequality. I always wanted to create that feeling with the bands I am playing in. So he was totally punk for me, even though he mainly worked with a piano and Bertolt Brecht.

In terms of style, I also really have a vision of how we should sound, like direct guitars with reduced distortion. That is probably not always easy for the others, but the most important thing for me is the energy we produce together.

MRR: Vienna is also known as a city where no one ever dances at shows. Do you move at shows? What do your shows look like?

Nicoletta: I always dance if I like the music. I also see that people in Vienna don't move a lot—sometimes I almost feel sad for bands from abroad because I'd think people are not appreciating it if they're just standing still… but it works out really fine at our shows—that's great!

Andi: I myself also really like to dance and I do not know if I am mistaken here: at punk shows I am mostly up front and sometimes confronted by the macho behavior of my peers who do not respect the space of other people. It's like drinking: a few often just take up too much space with an unaware and disrespectful behavior.

MRR: What obstacles do you encounter with this band?

Andi: Internal confusion.

MRR: In punk, there's always a theme around which bands flock together. The hardest bands, mutant punks, weirdo freaks, saddest or intelligent punks. But to be cute always felt like an offense to everyone. Everybody refuses to be called a cute band. But I think you are a cute band because I felt great watching you. I felt like my brain submerges into the most delicious ice cream and I danced in my stupid way and then you threw these waterproof plastic necklace wallets into the crowd that were an iconic object of my childhood summers. Would you resist being called cute?

Andi: I have no problem being called cute. But it might be different for people who are always referred to as being cute and therefore not taken seriously.

Nicoletta: I'm OK with cute, if that's your impression.

Veronika: Well, I am not totally happy with that description. Since I am onstage, people call me cute a lot, although I stand there and scream from the top of my lungs all the anger out of me until my head hurts and I piss my pants. Performing with Lime Crush is physically very demanding for me. I mean, maybe if that is someone's understanding of being cute, then I am OK with it. But it's probably about being taken seriously, 'cause I had the experience that people first see this little girl and for that reduce me to a certain image. And Andi is responsible for all the cute stuff, like the plastic necklace wallets in the band. He is also actually the one with the shortest pants.

MRR: What is the atmosphere you want to transmit to the crowd?

Veronika: That this is about being with them. This energy? I don't want it for me, it is with them. That we are all together in this club tonight, but also in this bullshit that happens in between and around us.

Nicoletta: Yes, energy and tension and consciousness.

MRR: What's behind the constant instrument and role switching in your live shows?

Nicoletta: It's important to try everything out if you play in a band and have the chance to try any instrument—but it doesn't have to be part of the performance. I think it shouldn't be the main hanger and the more people keep asking about it the less it seems interesting to me.

Andi: It's boring seeing people standing in one corner for twenty or thirty minutes. Bring in some change! Also, I really don't like the idea of professionalism or identity attached to an instrument.

Veronika: Actually at the moment I prefer to stay with one instrument, and have not had that much need to switch all the time.

MRR: Do your colleagues know that you play in a punk band or do you keep it a secret? I do and I have a total double life. I always lie about my shirts, saying I purchased them at thrift store, that I have no idea what they are and such.

Veronika: Why would you do that? What are you afraid of, Viktor? Let the shirts be shirts!

Nicoletta: People in my work life are really interested about me playing in bands. They're mostly like "Hey, you play in a band—cool!" and they keep asking what's going on. Sometimes I have the feeling that it overrules the rest of me and sometimes it's hard when I have the feeling they expect mainstream music, but I think it's important to face such contrasts.

MRR: Has punk or the underground life or DIY taught you anything that you can use in the lame real world?

Veronika: Well, for me Punk and DIY is my lame real world!

Andi: I am running away from the idea that this was a different place, whether more free to do harm to others or seeing it as a safe space thing. It is none of that. You have the same idiots here as anywhere else and at the same time can make friends just as well as, let's say, on the subway.

MRR: What other projects are you involved in?

Andi: I run a record label called Fettkakao.

Nicoletta: I play in a band called Cry Baby—we have a single out on Fettkakao.

Veronika: My other band is called Tirana, also releasing with Fettkakao. And lately I started working more and more in the field of fine arts, with videos, installations and as a performance artist.

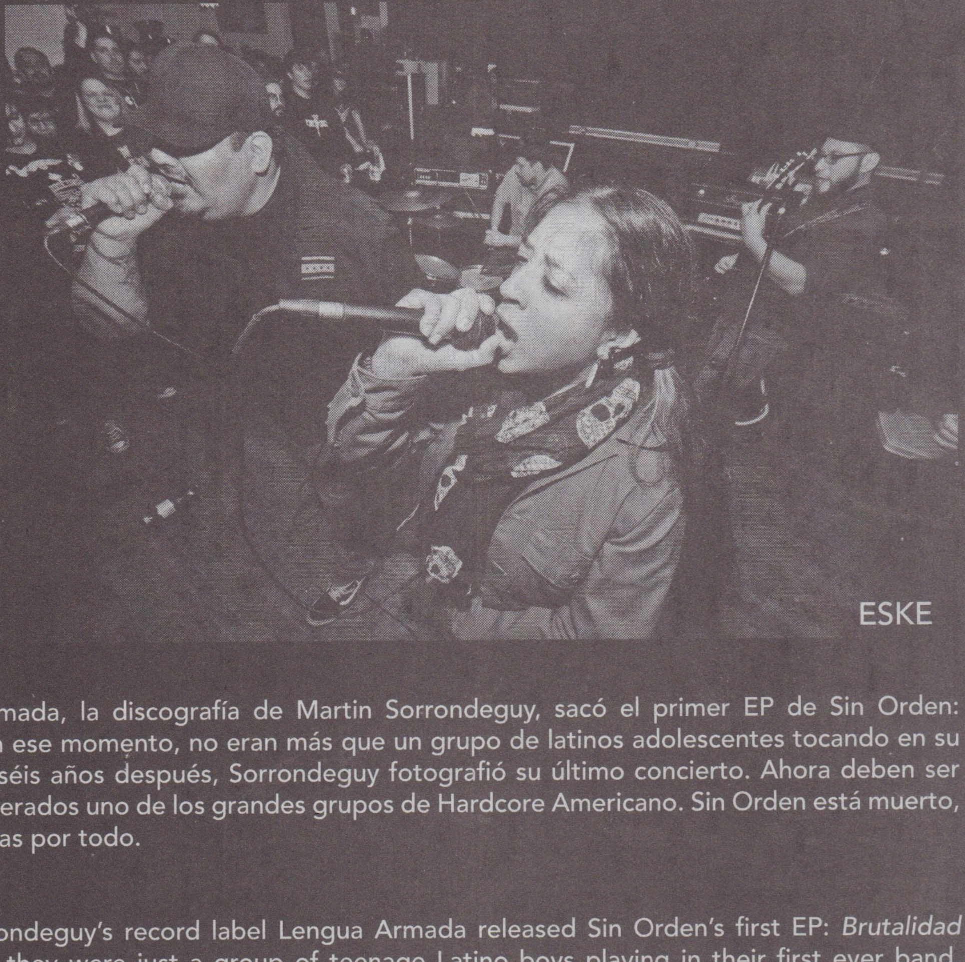
lime-crush.tumblr.com / fettkakao.tumblr.com

SIN ORDEN

COLONIA

KUU-JAAT

SIN ORDEN'S LAST SHOW


ESKE

En 2000, Lengua Armada, la discografía de Martin Sorrondeguy, sacó el primer EP de Sin Orden: *Brutalidad Juvenil*. En ese momento, no eran más que un grupo de latinos adolescentes tocando en su primera banda. Dieciséis años después, Sorrondeguy fotografió su último concierto. Ahora deben ser legítimamente considerados uno de los grandes grupos de Hardcore Americano. Sin Orden está muerto, Viva Sin Orden. Gracias por todo.

In 2000, Martin Sorrondeguy's record label Lengua Armada released Sin Orden's first EP: *Brutalidad Juvenil*. At the time, they were just a group of teenage Latino boys playing in their first ever band. Sixteen years later, Sorrondeguy photographed their final show. Now they should rightfully be regarded as one of the modern American hardcore greats. Sin Orden is dead, long live Sin Orden. Thanks for everything.

SIN ORDEN PHOTOS BY MARTIN SORRONDEGUY APRIL 8, 2016 CHICAGO, IL, USA

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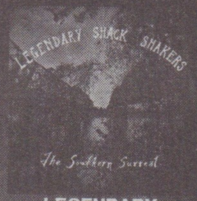
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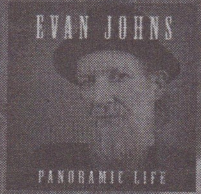
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Panoramic Life
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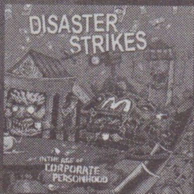
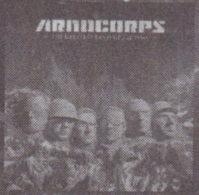

DISASTER STRIKES
IN THE AGE OF CORPORATE PERSONHOOD

DISASTER STRIKES
In The Age of Corporate Person Hood
Coming Summer 2016!



ARNOCORPS
The Greatest Band Of All Time
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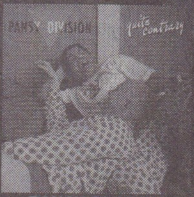
PANSY DIVISION
quite contrary

PANSY DIVISION
QUITE CONTRARY
Coming September 9, 2016!

CULTURE SHOCK
ATTENTION SPAN

CULTURE SHOCK
Attention Span
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MISCHIEF BREW
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MISCHIEF BREW
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electropunk > synthwave > deathdisco
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boilerman
Feel Ways About Stuff

GO WHITE BRONCO
***POPULATION: GHOST TOWN* LP**
Five years in the making, *Population: Ghost Town* is the first LP from Long Island lifer-band Go White Bronco. A lineup of musicians culled from 20-year collaborators and friends from local bands like Iron Chic, Fellow Project, Deep Pockets, Splurge, and Ancient Tongue, this nine track debut full length is a mostly bleak, sometimes triumphant existential meditation led by three acoustic guitars, crushing lyrics, and soaring multi-part harmonies. Crosby, Stills, Hash, and Old.

BOILERMAN
***FEEL WAYS ABOUT STUFF* LP/CD**
With four EPs, an LP, and a slew of cassettes and compilations released since their 2010 demo, Boilerman has played over 170 shows across the US and Canada. The band's sophomore full length is 12 new songs using a sonic pallet drawn as much from bands like Leatherface and Articles of Faith as it is contemporaries like Canadian Rifle, Tenement, and Witches with Dicks. The album is rounded out by a faithful cover of The Mice's 1986 "Not Proud Of The USA" and illustrations by Shannon Thompson.

86'd RECORDS and DISTRO

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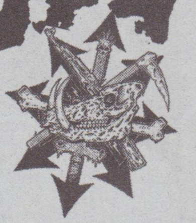
DOKUGA



Dokuga is the name of a band from Porto, the second-largest city in Portugal. The band is composed of 4 characters: Kisto Kutabari (vocals), Miguel Banzai (guitar), Oscar Gloom (bass), and Arakiri Girø (drums).

Although Dokuga has existed for some time, it's only in the last two years that they have been more active as a band. Dokuga seemed to always be a second choice for Oscar and Girø when compared with the more prominent Freedoom (Oscar being the vocalist and guitarist in that band and Girø the drummer) and Oscar and Girø were not living in Poro (Oscar in Lisbon and Girø in London). Recently, with the demise of Freedoom and with those two back, Dokuga is back at it with full force!

Their discography is comprised of a CD-R EP issued in 2007 just after the band's birth, a split CD from 2010 with another band from Porto (Motornoise), and a LP released by Garagem Records in the fall of 2015—the only recording that does any justice to their thunderous roar!

This interview was done in the sub-basement of the tattoo shop where Miguel and Kisto work.

Interview and introduction by Oscar Pinho. Photos by Rui Oliveira and Pedro Roque.

MRR: Dokuga seems like a pretty strange name for a Portuguese band. Why did you choose that name and what does it mean?

Oscar: We were in a coffee shop and Kisto arrived with a sheet full of names.

Kist: It had to start with a "d" and it had to be Japanese. We were in need of a name for a gig that was in about a week. At first we thought it meant "vicious," but it actually means something like "poisonous moth" or "vicious way"...

Miguel: It came translated as "wrong way" or "vicious way."

Kisto: But we only found about that later. *[laughs]*

MRR: Your name had to be Japanese and you all have Japanese aliases. Is the Japanese scene that influential to you?

Kisto: Even if we all like the Japanese scene, I think it only served as a reference in the beginning of the band.

MRR: Can you state your main musical influences?

Kisto: UK punk from the '80s and, personally, bands like Poison Idea and La Polla Records because of their lyrics.

Girø: English punk scene from early 80–84 (GBH, Discharge, One Way System, Varukers), Swedish bands like Wolfbrigade, Disfear, Skitsystem, US bands like Dead Kennedys, and of course Japanese bands like GISM, Confuse, Disclose, and all that crazy noise!

Oscar: To me, the Swedish scene was quite important. Bands like, for instance Abba, Roxette, or Ace Of Base. *[laughs]*

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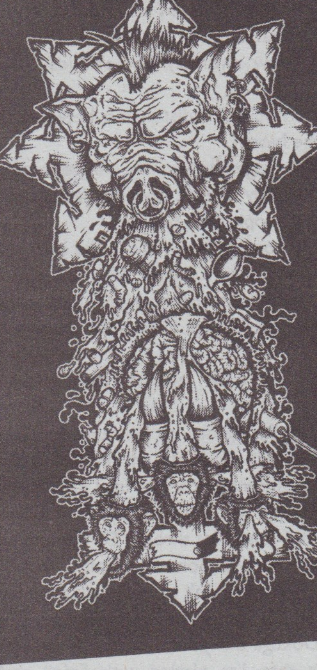

MRR: Even if you're not all originally from Porto, can you describe how it is to live here?

Miguel: It's a big village! It has some of the good things of a big city, but at the same time it has a lot of proximity. You get to know everyone, but you can go out in the streets without meeting anyone, and that's cool.

Girø: It's the only interesting city in the country. *[laughs]* For all the shit that this country is, I think Porto is the most genuine city, even in terms of its punk scene.

MRR: I was just going to ask you about the punk scene...

Girø: It's a more punk city than Lisbon [the capital], which is more directed to hardcore. Porto has a more natural punk scene.

Kisto: It's always the same people here.

Girø: Some disappear and some come out, and that's interesting. There are always new people coming to the scene.

MRR: What about bands from Porto that are worth mentioning?

Girø: Besides the bands that we play or played in...

Miguel: Like Renegados (de Boliqueime).

MRR: ...but still active.

Kisto: There are new kids...Shitmouth or Cruelist, for instance. There's Cabeça de Martelo and Estado de Sítio that are not from Porto but it's like they were!

Oscar: From Braga: Vai-te Foder.

Kisto: There's people from Barcelos: Warbombs, Repressão Caótica...

Girø: We have a good connection with the people from Barcelos and with the towns near Porto.

MRR: So there's some kind of a Northern Portuguese scene, wouldn't you say?

Oscar: It's incredible. The scene in Barcelos, that's one thing that constantly surprises me. I've known

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Barcelos since I was quite young (because I live nearby) and who could imagine some years ago that there would be an interesting punk scene with so much activity.

MRR: And Barcelos is not only the punk scene—there is plenty of musical activity for such a small city.

Oscar: Yes, it grew musically. There's kids, bands, festivals...

Kisto: There is not much distinction between the bands from the North.

Oscar: Everybody together, we make a bigger bunch...

Girø: Porto probably doesn't have so many bands... there are more people than bands...

Kisto: ...but everyone gathers here in the end.

Girø: Everyone gathers here and there's an interconnection and friendship, mainly with bands from Aveiro, Barcelos, Braga, Ovar, and Coimbra.

MRR: Can we talk about bands that you've been in?

Girø: I played in Renegados de Boliqueime, a band I formed with Frágil (vocalist), an important band in the '90s. When Renegados split up, I immediately formed a new band with Oscar called Freedoom, a band that toured quite a lot through Europe and had some exposure outside. Some time after that we started Dokuga, which hasn't had as much exposure.

Oscar: I would like to mention that we celebrated ten years of Dokuga this year.

Girø: Besides that, I'm playing with Frágil again (and with Oscar) in another band: Fuck 77, a more punk rock thing. I didn't play with Frágil for some time, with the exception of some Renegados de Boliqueime reunions. And that's it.

Oscar: I started very young in a band that did three gigs—that was Insurrectos. Not long after with him [Giro], Lúcio, and Rui, who also played with me in that band [Insurrectos], we made Freedoom which lasted 'til 2013? 2014? We started in 2001. In 2006, we started Dokuga. I've also been playing guitar with a band from Lisbon called Atentado. Basically my way is parallel with Girø's, since I started to play with him and I kept on playing with him...

MRR: You two make a team in a certain way...

Girø: A little couple. *[laughs]*

Oscar: I can tell, with no false humility, that musically we get along quite well. We can catch each other's intuitions and it's much easier...

Girø: ...and faster to come up with things. In rehearsals, it's easier to communicate.

Oscar: We make up something, give our opinions, and change some bits here and there, and it's never problematic—we don't hurt each other's feelings.

MRR: You've built a method.

Oscar: Yes.

Girø: It's a natural thing.

Miguel: I started with Dokuga in 2006.

MRR: You weren't so young then...

Miguel: I wasn't young, but I've been playing since I was thirteen in Viana (do Castelo), but nothing serious. I never had a serious band, just played with some friends. And now I also play in Vürmo—that started in 2015 with Kisto.

Kisto: I also started in Dokuga in 2006.

MRR: Also not very young.

Kisto: But I also had some experiences when I was younger...

Girø: We are talking about music, nothing else! *[laughs]*

Kisto: ...but nothing serious. Meanwhile, I was in Hellcharge, a dirtier shit mix, supposedly a cross between black metal and punk.

Girø: With a beautiful t-shirt.

Miguel: With a great t-shirt!

Kisto: Now Vürmo, also with Miguel, and guys from bands like Estado de Sítio, Vai-te Foder, Alcoholocaust, and Midnight Priest, a more punk'n'roll thing.

MRR: All of a sudden it seems like punk in Portugal is being heralded by the media—there's a sociological study, documentaries, books. Why? Is that because the scene is any healthier than before?

Kisto: I don't think so. I think there's a part of punk that is more exposed, and that's perhaps what's less interesting to us. A more colorful and visible part.

Girø: The more popular part. We prefer a more genuine and underground thing. It's not that we don't get along with those guys. The people interviewed in these works are all the same, a lot of them are not in the scene anymore, they left the scene many years ago and speak like they are big prophets of it. I sincerely think that most of the crap that's been done recently is a lot of bollocks.

Miguel: They focus too much on the first years of the Portuguese punk and don't develop enough after that.

Girø: It's the same bands again and again.

Miguel: However important those bands were for a lot of people back then, they don't mean much for those who started later. We have more international influences nowadays—not so much local. Borders were more closed back then.

Girø: ...And when it's local, it's not necessarily those bands.

Miguel: The local bands that influenced me and a lot of people my age didn't get the attention they should.

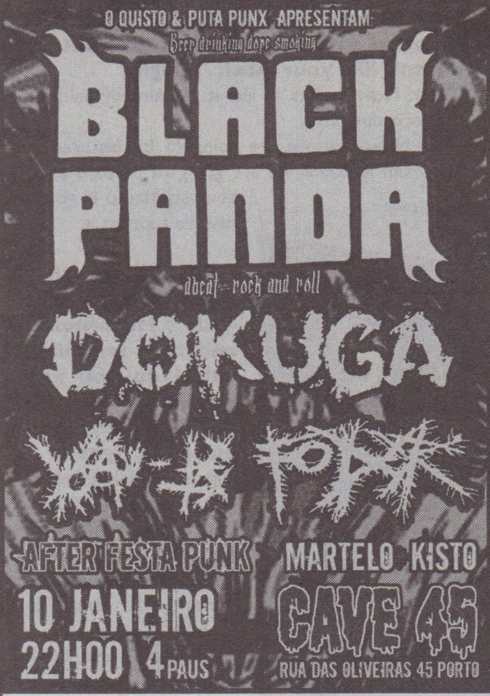
Kisto: They don't focus on the more relevant things in terms of activism. There is also some kind of mysticism created around certain bands that was never there at all. Maybe that's because some people have the right media connections, but those bands were never true references for people who live it daily like us. Some Northern bands are not mentioned much but sure are more active, and active during a longer period of time, than the ones that are used as a flagship for the scene.

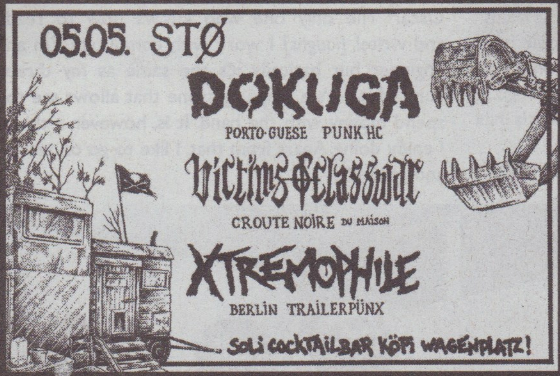
Oscar: They focus a lot on the early bands, that don't exist anymore...

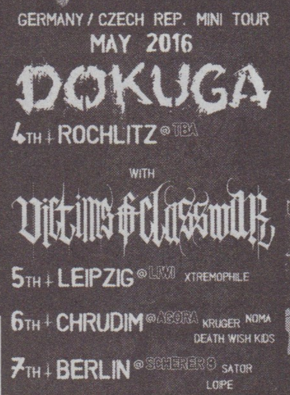
Kisto: They were quite brief. They lasted two or three years. For many, it was a circumstantial thing. They got together at a time of a certain hype around punk, then they ended or changed their sound. And now, somehow, they return as messiahs to the scene, even though they never had a true punk ethic. But I guess that happened everywhere...

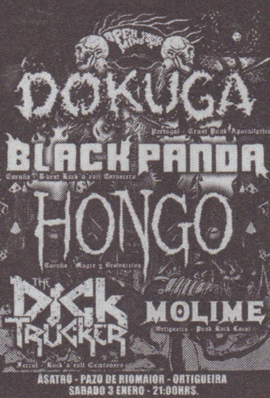
Oscar: I'm not saying that they weren't good, they had their importance, but if you want to make a study of how things are now, you can't focus only on that, because those bands called it quits and they are only an image of a certain time...

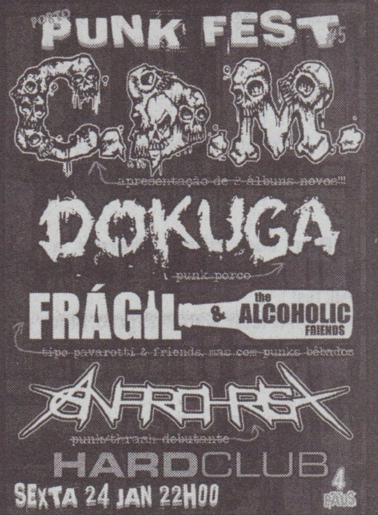
Miguel: ...And the people involved got out of the scene.

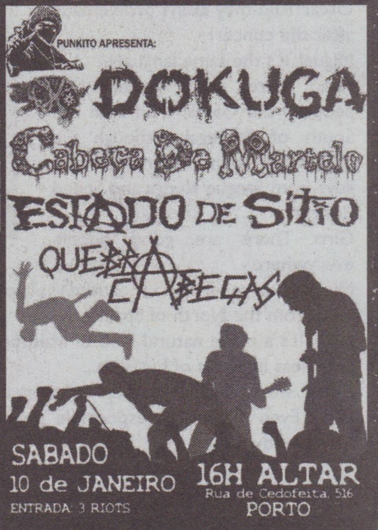

O QUISTO & PUTA PUNX APRESENTAM:
Beer drinking dope smoking
BLACK PANDA
dbeat rock and roll
DOKUGA
AFTER FESTA PUNK
MARTELO KISTO
10 JANEIRO
22H00 4 PAUS
CAVE 45
RUA DAS OLIVEIRAS 45 PORTO


05.05. STØ
DOKUGA
PORTO-GUESE PUNK HC
VICTIMS OF CLASSWAR
CROUTE NOIRE DU MAISON
XTREMOPHILE
BERLIN TRAILERPÜNX
SOLI COCKTAILBAR KÖPI WAGENPLATZ!


GERMANY / CZECH REP. MINI TOUR
MAY 2016
DOKUGA
4TH + ROCHLITZ @ TBA
WITH
VICTIMS OF CLASSWAR
5TH + LEIPZIG @ LWI XTREMOPHILE
6TH + CHRUDIM @ AGORA KRUGER NOMA DEATH WISH KIDS
7TH + BERLIN @ SCHERER 8 SATOR LOPE


DOKUGA
BLACK PANDA
HONGO
THE DICK TRUCKER
MOLIME
ÁSATRÚ - PAZO DE RIOMAIOR - ORTIGUEIRA
SABADO 3 ENERO - 21:00HRS.


PUNK FEST
C.D.M.
apresentação de 2 álbuns novos!!!
DOKUGA
punk porco
FRÁGIL & the ALCOHOLIC FRIENDS
tipo pavarotti & friends, mas com punks bêbados
ANTROPHOBIA
punk/thrash debutante
HARDCLUB
SEXTA 24 JAN 22H00
4 PAUS


PUNKITO APRESENTA:
DOKUGA
Cabeça De Martelo
ESTADO DE SÍTIO
QUEBRA CABEÇAS
SABADO
10 de JANEIRO
ENTRADA: 3 RIOTS
16H ALTAR
Rua de Cedofeita, 516
PORTO

Girø: They didn't last long in the scene. And suddenly they are happy because attention is being drawn on them again. And they speak like those were the days.

Kisto: It's like the criteria used is that of the commercial relevance.

MRR: The fact that the biggest Portuguese rock band [Xutos & Pontapés] supposedly came from the punk scene also contributes to that...

Oscar: It could.

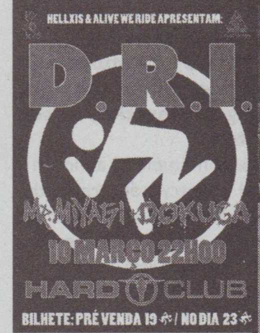
Kisto: Even that band is a bit miserable. They had some good stuff at the beginning, but if you compare them with several similar [bands that went into the mainstream] in Spain, it's both miserable and sad. [laughs]

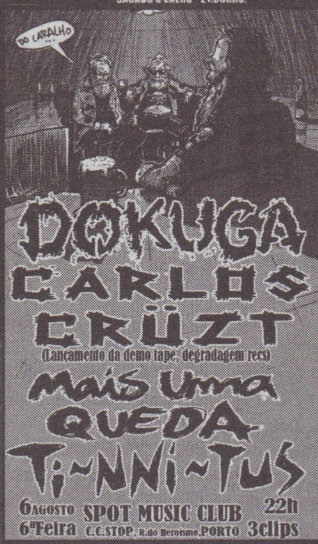
MRR: A band like Girø had—Renegados de Boliqueime—that was really important in the '90s, at least in the north, and deserved more relevance.

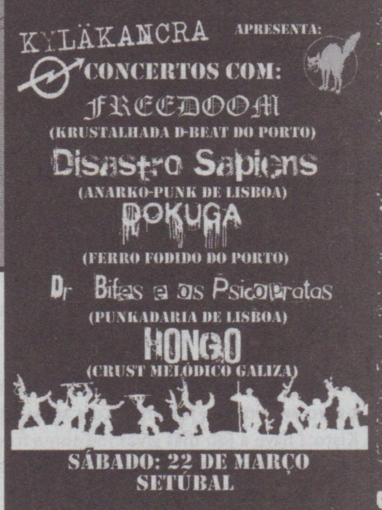
Girø: Even in a particular book that just came out, that has Kisto on the cover, which I think is alright—at least there's someone pretty there [laughs]. I only went briefly through this book and I thought it would be more interesting than it in fact is. They almost don't speak about a band like Renegados de Boliqueime and speak about many bands that had nothing to do with the scene and didn't have the importance of Renegados. Even if this band was chaotic and not great in terms of music, technically speaking, it was important in the '90s. And for sure deserved more than a footnote in a book like that. Maybe that happens also because we were from Porto. If we were from Coimbra or Lisbon, Renegados would probably get more attention.

MRR: Let's talk about other punk related activities. You two, Kisto and Girø, promoted quite a lot of concerts. Do you wanna talk about it?

Girø: We know that organizing gigs is always quite ungrateful, but I held quite a lot in the end of last century and in the beginning of this one. Many of them with the help from Kisto, and vice-versa. It was cool to promote most of them. Porto Rio, where we held most of them, was an important venue...


HELLXIS & ALIVE WE RIDE APRESENTAM:
D.R.I.
MR MIYAGI · DOKUGA
10 MARÇO 22H00
HARD CLUB
BILHETE: PRÉ VENDA 19 / NO DIA 23


DO CARALHO
DOKUGA
CARLOS CRÜZT
(Lançamento da demo tape, degradagem recs)
Mais Uma QUEDA
TI-NNI-TUS
6 AGOSTO
6ª Feira
SPOT MUSIC CLUB
C.C.STOP, R.do Heroismo PORTO
22h
3clips


KYLÄKANCRA APRESENTA:
CONCERTOS COM:
FREEDOOM
(KRUSTALHADA D-BEAT DO PORTO)
Disastro Sapiens
(ANARKO-PUNK DE LISBOA)
DOKUGA
(FERRO FODIDO DO PORTO)
Dr Bifes e os Psicopiratas
(PUNKADARIA DE LISBOA)
HONGO
(CRUST MELÓDICO GALIZA)
SÁBADO: 22 DE MARÇO
SETÚBAL

MRR: ...A boat [in Douro river].

Girø: Now it's Cave 45—it's perhaps the place in Porto with the best conditions for punk concerts. Even if there are some dodgy people working there. *[laughs]* Now I don't have so much time to do it, but we brought great bands over in the past, from Wolfbrigade and GBH to Severed Head of State and Inepsy, Gasmask Terror, Ballast, etc...Several foreign bands came here and we have succeeded in putting Porto on punk's international touring map. Since Portugal is located in the ass of Europe, it's not a place where you pass by unless you do a big tour. I think we did some cool concerts, 100% genuine, we never managed to earn money with them—quite the opposite, even if many jealous people said we earned millions. Unfortunately on most of them we didn't earn enough to cover the expenses.

Kisto: And we keep on doing it. More recently Social Chaos and Lobotomia from Brazil.

Girø: Maybe not so much as before.

Kisto: Now there are younger kids doing it, but more directed to other stuff like hardcore. We are active in other ways. We do DJ sets, contribute with bands, do artwork for other bands, and things like that...

Oscar: And dinner! *[laughs]*

Girø: We make food for other bands...

Oscar: ...provide accommodation.

Girø: Sometimes we provide sleeping places for touring bands. If you come to Porto and want to know about punk, everybody knows who we are because we are 100% into it.

MRR: You have a special connection with some bands from abroad, like with the people from Coruña [Galicia, Spain]. Do you want to talk about that?

Oscar: All drug heads! *[laughs]* Drunks and drug heads.

Kisto: There's a short distance between people from the North [of Spain and Portugal]—Coruña, Vigo, and Galicia in general. Black Panda, Hursus, Hongo...

Girø: It's that special connection that Galicia has with Porto and the North of Portugal.

Kisto: We are preparing a mini tour with Black Panda now.

MRR: You think there's a similar attitude? And drugs?

All: Yes!

Oscar: At least with that band. Not drugs.

Kisto: Even with straight people from Vigo.

Oscar: With Black Panda, I think it was almost love at first sight.

Girø: They like to party and do crazy stuff at concerts as much as we do.

Oscar: And they aren't problematic after the concert.

Miguel: It's the same language.

Kisto: There's closer proximity to people from Galicia than with the South of Portugal, although we have many friends there, like the guys from Sangue Xunga and Speed Bringerz.

Girø: There are good people everywhere.

Miguel: But generally, our attitude is closer to the folks from the North of Spain.

Girø: It's a more natural kind of attitude. We both think less in terms of business...

Kisto: ...we think less in business and more in partying.

Girø: Even if we are responsible people. We all have steady jobs.

MRR: So what do you do for a living? And how do you balance the tours with your jobs?

Girø: I've always been a cook. It's not easy to balance both things—everybody knows how difficult schedules are for people working in hotels and restaurants—but I manage somehow. The holidays I have are always for the bands. That's why all my relationships fall apart and the divorces... *[laughs]* Essentially I try to occupy all my free time with the bands. The people in the band are my friends, so it's the thing I most enjoy doing. We are working people, we all enjoy partying and drinking, but our daily life is full of work and I'm a bit proud of that. Now I have the best vegetarian restaurant in Porto—Lupin. Vegetarian and vegan.

MRR: [to Kisto] And you? Are you proud of your work? *[laughs]* You should be!

Kisto: I have a job that gives me some freedom. I'm a tattoo artist. I have a certain liberty of schedules. We have some leeway to go out and play...

Girø: And we don't have bosses fucking up our heads.

Miguel: I work in a tattoo shop—Spider Tattoos—as a body piercer. That's a nice job where I can control my schedules. If I go out to play, I don't work and I don't earn any money, but that's an option. It's your responsibility.

Girø: And we have a person with a degree. *[laughs]*

MRR: The engineer...

Kisto: The only person who really studied. The only person who has a boss is the only one that really studied. *[laughs]*

Oscar: The only one who knows how to read and write! *[laughs]* I work with computers. I'm an engineer but basically it's the same as my three comrades—it's a stepping stone that allows me to spend money with the band. It is, however, a thing I enjoy doing. Apart from that, I like to go on walks and camping.

MRR: Changing subjects: nowadays with the refugee crisis, there are more and more European countries where the right wing is gaining strength. How do you see Portugal in this context?

Miguel: Here reigns a certain stupidity, although I think we are a peaceful country concerning the reception of people from abroad. People talk about it as news comes from the outside and there's a resurface of xenophobia, nationalism, and other moronic movements. But first of all, the refugees don't want to come here *[laughs]*, but if they come, I don't think there would be big reactions against it.

Kisto: As a band, our attitude is not very preachy. Fuck all countries, basically.

MRR: Do you wanna say something about the extreme right in Portugal?

Girø: It's a bunch of suckers.

Kisto: They're quite weak.

Oscar: I have dinner with them every Friday and there's good people there. *[laughs]*

Girø: They're nothing but a bunch of criminals, nothing more. They are completely contradictory: they proclaim themselves big defenders of the morality, but at the same time they are involved in drug traffic, extortion, and things like that.

Kisto: ...and gun traffic. Fortunately in Porto, they are not so visible as in the south of Portugal.

Girø: We are not afraid of them whatsoever.

MRR: Your LP was issued by a record label not necessarily affiliated with punk—Garagem Records. Why that label?

Oscar: Because the label selected us. *[laughs]* We were lucky that the label boss is a crazy guy...

Kisto: ...And that he's rich. He's been my friend for a long time—Marco McLaren.

Oscar: He is crazy, but a good person.

Kisto: Even if he likes a different kind of punk, he was involved in the launch of other punk bands.

Girø: And I think he likes us and what we do.

MRR: It's not very flattering to you, but he often says that he loves you but he doesn't like your music. *[laughs]*

Oscar: Now he has to like it. He already paid for the recording, so...

Girø: Now that we are going to be featured in *Maximum Rocknroll* we are going to prepare a US tour, so Marco is gonna have to support it.

MRR: Before this, you only had a split with Motornoise, and that recording didn't do you any justice. Now with the LP things will be easier, right?

Miguel: I think Eduardo Magalhães and Manuel dos Reis—the guys who recorded us— really understood how we wanted this album to sound.

Girø: There were some delays: of the record coming out, of us going abroad, but now with this record hopefully people will have a better image of the band, which we hope can provide us some more chances to play around.

MRR: Future projects?

Miguel: We are planning to record some stuff this year...

Kisto: ...A split or an EP, since it's our tenth anniversary.

Girø: We are planning some dates in March with Black Panda...

Kisto: ...in Spain, and some mini tours through Europe. Germany and Czech Republic in May and maybe France, Italy and Switzerland a couple of months later. And we have a chance to do a tour in Brazil later this year or the next.

Girø: This year we are trying to take Dokuga to another level, to be more on the road. We are going old and who knows, one of these days we can die.

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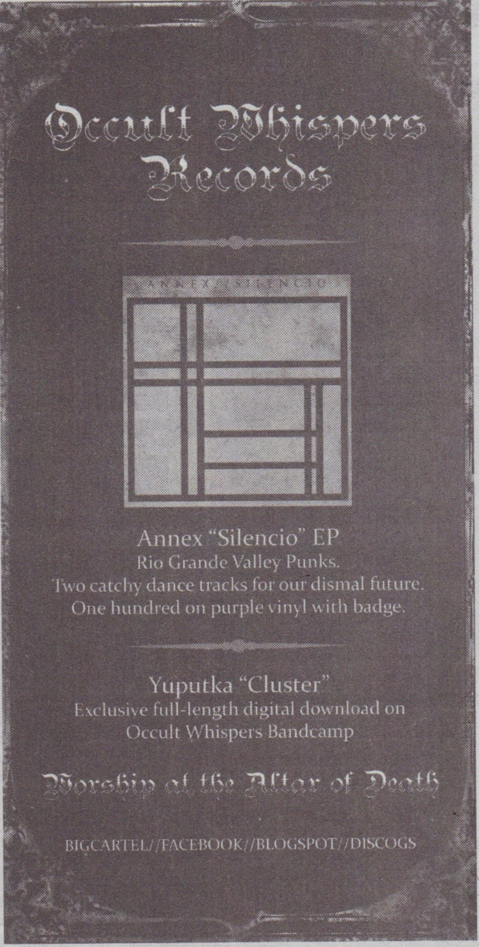

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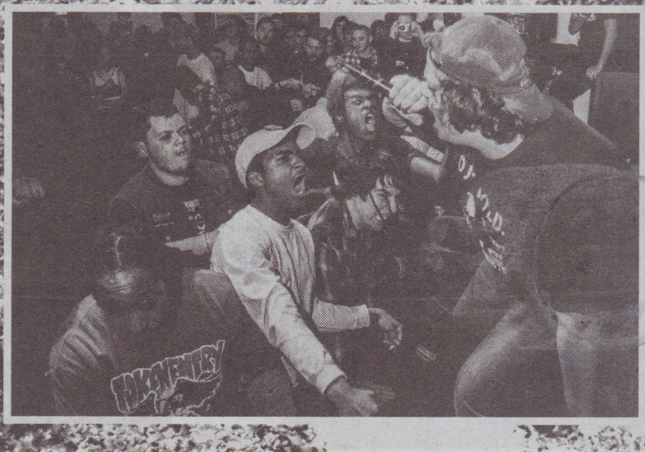

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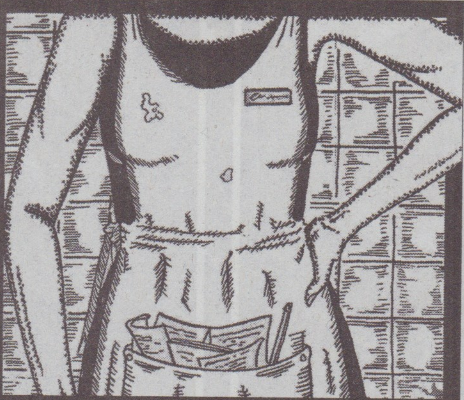

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kitten FOREVER

The women in Kitten Forever have been playing music together for nearly ten years but have been best friends even longer. Much of the year, Kitten Forever are busy collaborating, writing, and playing shows in basements, backyards, art spaces and bars. They have gained love and respect in Minneapolis and are widely considered to have one of the best live performances anywhere. Live, they pull off the impossible, a rare mix of wild punk birthday party and infectiously positive pep rally thrown for whatever room they're in. Now their work is reaching further and further as they travel and spread their messages of independence, love, fun, and strength. As the band's newest full-length record 7 Hearts approaches its release, we hung out in Corrie's sparkly, warm living room in South Minneapolis for a night and discussed their process, their relationship, astrology, and art.

Interview and introduction by Erica Krumm. Photos by Melissa Hesse, Sharyn Marros, and the band.

MRR: In my opinion, *7 Hearts* is the most intensely emotional and complex of all your albums so far. I was wondering if you'd agree. Which song makes you the most excited when you play it live?

Laura: I would definitely agree that it's more complex emotionally than anything else we've put out. A way we've described this album is like a big sister to [our 2013 album] *Pressure*, where we take a lot of the same ideas and sort of expand upon them to challenge ourselves a little bit more to write...I mean, we've always written really personally, but I think we get a little deeper into specific subjects in a way we haven't really done in the past. My perception is like that. We are certainly working with more layers than we have in the past.

Corrie: I would agree. I think that for me, at least, writing songs for the first time on the last record felt like, what's the phrase…? Getting my sea legs? I had never really written lyrics in a way that they actually become a song before. I was playing with a lot of stuff then and trying to figure it out. This time around there was a lot more intention behind it. I think that it was a weird year... and some weird personal stuff happened. The songs turned out to reflect that a little more than before.

Liz: Favorite song to play live? I have one for each of us. I most like playing "Heavy Dreamy" for a song I sing. As far as songs that Corrie sings, I feel most excited when we play "Cannon," and for Laura I get most excited when we play "200X."

MRR: OK, so whoever sang the song wrote the lyrics? I'm so secretive about lyrics, I don't want to press or ask questions about that!

Liz: Generally speaking. There's small exceptions where a certain verse was worked out as a group. The song "Brainstorm," that we all sing on, was co-written as far as lyrics go.

Corrie: Yeah like, if I'm on bass, I'm writing the bass part for it. If I'm singing, I wrote the lyrics for it. "Brainstorm" was one of the last songs we finished on the album. We really specifically wanted to write a song that had all three of us singing a pseudo lead. Liz is technically the lead vocal on that song. She wrote the majority of the lyrics…My favorite song to play is probably "Temple."

Laura: Well…I like all of my children in equally different ways….but I really like playing "Hail Mary."

Corrie: That's your drum rager!

Laura: *[laughs]* That's my drum rager!

MRR: The lyrics to "Hail Mary" are insane! They're beautiful. It's become a huge part of your live show that you switch up playing bass, drums, and vocals, and you do it seamlessly. I think it's become a really characteristic part of who you are, and it makes you seem like a collective of artists and partners, I think, more than other live bands. It also feels really natural and exciting. What does it feel like for you guys? What's the best part of it for you?

Corrie: The best part of it is that it does feel like you're performing in something that is closer to a collective than to a traditional band. I wrote a paper that said that I feel like I don't personally identify as a musician and that I personally identify as a feminist performance artist.

I like there not being a lead singer, and the people that are there to back up a lead singer…even before we switched up instruments, Liz was on lead vocals, but I don't feel like any of us ever felt that way. I feel like we always sort of came across as being a part of a team. This is just the next step in that feeling.

Liz: Initially when we were starting to switch, there was an initial freak out that would happen and that was really satisfying to watch happen. People would melt and lose their shit and that doesn't happen as much anymore because people know what they're getting into or what they are about to see. But it evens out the workload, which is always a thing we are trying to navigate in the band, to make sure everyone feels not smothered.

Corrie: Or not fried.

Liz: Or not fried by everything they had been doing. Not only just musically, but business end, too.

MRR: Would you say that switching instruments on stage is maybe even more important off stage because you're sharing in writing not only lyrics but bass and drum parts and discussing how that will all flow together in any particular song?

Corrie: Totally. I think we have always had a very democratic workload as a band. I think that once we started switching, the natural way that we trade off and the way that we do things in the band interpersonally transferred really easily to the way we write songs. I think it's the idea that when you work on a project, you work better as a team when everyone is sharing and trading off responsibilities. Things are always more exciting when they are getting told from multiple perspectives versus just one. Now that we write songs that way, it's a flow.

MRR: So you guys went on tour with Babes in Toyland this past fall. What are your favorite memories of that experience?

Corrie: In Little Rock, Arkansas, there weren't a lot of tickets sold, so a few days in advance they dropped the price of the show to free and it ended up being one of the most fun shows we played. Watching Babes play that set was one of the only times the three of us all got to watch them together from start to finish because often times we were running around doing other stuff. That experience of watching their whole set together was pretty fun. But my favorite memory was having a really interesting conversation with Kat about the ways in which people make women feel like they're too old to perform and they don't make men feel that way. If I could have told myself when I was fifteen that I would have a feminist theory conversation about the socially constructed roles that women play as they age, with Kat Bjelland of Babes in Toyland, I would have shot myself into space! *[laughs]*

Laura: My favorite memory was the night in Atlanta, Georgia, after our show, someone offered to get us into a haunted house that was next door. It was one of those haunted houses that cost like, $25 and you have to sign a waiver to get in…It's interactive and they touch you and spray shit on you and scream in your face. It was pretty fun anyways. It was very claustrophobic and pretty gross. We went into this one room and we were all holding hands the entire time and it was me and Corrie, Clara and Kat from Babes in Toyland, and a couple people who had been at the show. We entered into this room that was maybe 12x12 and a pure white cube. White walls, white floors, white ceiling, and a strobe light going and you can't see anything because it's so disorienting. We get through it and Kat goes, "Oh, I love that room, I could just stay in there forever!"

Corrie: Yeah, the scariest thing I've ever done is like, her zen place!

Liz: My favorite memory from tour was laying in a bunk on the tour bus with Clara and I in the same bunk. *[laughs]* That was fun, they're small…

MRR: How did the album art come together for *7 Hearts* and who is the artist? It's very mysterious.

Liz: We had talked a lot about the feeling of the art, we wanted it to be darker. We had all these different ideas for the cover and then it became this bigger thing where we wanted to have a series of photographs on the cover, and I really like using photographs for record covers rather than using a drawing or even a photo of us.

MRR: So Liz, you did the album cover?

Liz: Yes, but Corrie and I made the seven photos that are on the album cover together. It's her hand! We had created a short list of things we wanted to photograph and the things we wanted them to represent.

Corrie: They represent, in a basic way, all the different ideas we had for covers. We wanted it to kind of look like when you're at a gallery….

Liz: Like a body of work.

Corrie: Yeah, multiple images that are all different but belong to one cohesive collection.

MRR: Is the title of the record a secret? The meaning behind it?

Corrie: *7 Hearts* is a line from one of the songs. Of all the ideas that got thrown around out there, that's the one that stuck the most. It sums up all these ideas we were talking about. The fractured pieces of a thing that work together to create a whole.

Liz: We've never specifically talked about what that lyric means in the song, The way I was thinking about it when I wrote it originally was about previous relationships. Like romantic relationships and the different forms you take through other people. How each time, I'm like a different version or something. And then also I was really into worms at the time and they have like, I don't know how many hearts they have, like five? And then you cut them up and they re-grow their own new worm.

MRR: Wow, that's true? If you hang out with Kitten Forever long enough, you'll get worm trivia!

Corrie: I don't think any of us has ever asked like, "What is that song about that you wrote?" You know? It's weird to be in a band where two-thirds of your songs are written by someone else when you also write lyrics. It becomes a weird thing like, the lyrics to your band's songs are not all by you. But I really like listening to the songs that Liz and Laura write and listening to those lyrics. Even though they're not mine.

MRR: It's cool that you don't worry about taking credit for who wrote what.

Corrie: It's a really unique experience, as a songwriter in your band, to have other songwriters in the band and I can listen to a song that Liz or Laura wrote and connect with it as a fan but also connect with it in a way that it also sort of belongs to me. We sing along to each other's songs, we do backup vocals to each other's songs, and I'm singing lyrics to something my friend wrote for something that they experience and I'm singing with them, and then next I'll be singing what I think and they'll be singing it with me also and there's a weird blended thing that happens.

We are going to all find different ways to connect with each other's songs.

Laura: I think there's something to be said too for having trust in your bandmates. You are all equally writing things. We have trust with each other that we know that we have each other's backs for the kind of things we're writing about even if we don't immediately discuss the minute details about what they're about.

MRR: How much writing do you end up scrapping?

Laura: Correct me if I'm wrong—we've maybe gotten rid of one song in our ten years as a band. It was because we wrote a song exactly like it.

Corrie: I don't know, I would say this time there were a couple more things we had to scrap. The way we write together is not very planned out. I think it's a product of trying not to take ourselves too seriously also. If someone comes to the table with a riff, we try to make it into something and we almost always do with a handful of exceptions…

Liz: I was laughing because…

Laura: *[laughs]* We're not very critical of our own work!

MRR: It sounds like you guys don't stroke every little part of every song to make it over- thought. It's much more gut instinct.

Corrie: Part of that comes from having such a small setup. We're writing songs to play them live so that we can go on tour and hang out and not to like, write songs to write some opus. The writing of the songs is to play live. With such a small setup, there's not a lot of room to noodle around.

MRR: Since you have been together making music for so long, do you struggle with writer's block?

Liz: That was something that I did really intensely struggle with before we started switching [instruments], and when we started doing that it was an insane relief. I don't have to write twelve to fifteen new songs in the next year.

Corrie: We're not in a continuous writing process. We'll go through a spurt of six months where we will write twelve or fifteen songs and then spend the next year playing those songs. I feel like our writing process—the time period—is really fun. Everyone is really excited to hear each other's songs!

MRR: It sounds like all of you are fans of each other's writing. You each have your own writing style.

Corrie: It was like that before we were in a band, and that's part of the reason we wanted to be in a band together. When we were younger, I really loved Laura's band, Baby Guts, and would listen to their record all the time. Liz was a fan of Baby Guts. I knew Liz as an artist and Laura and I were both fans of her.

MRR: So you guys recorded *7 Hearts* with Matt Castore of Condominium. How did that come about?

Laura: Matt had recorded my old band, Cadette, and I just had a really incredible experience with him in the studio. I think he's a very, very thoughtful producer and really cares about the thing he's working on and really puts his entire focus into it. I was really impressed with that experience and I really wanted to work with him again no matter what project it was. He has an incredible way of understanding exactly what we're trying to get at.

Corrie: He was willing to put in the work of doing mixes a certain way or recording a certain way to just let us hear what it would sound like.

Liz: I feel like it's hard for us sometimes to sound good recorded because people don't know how to make a bass be the only instrument without a guitar, but he gets it in a way no one else has.

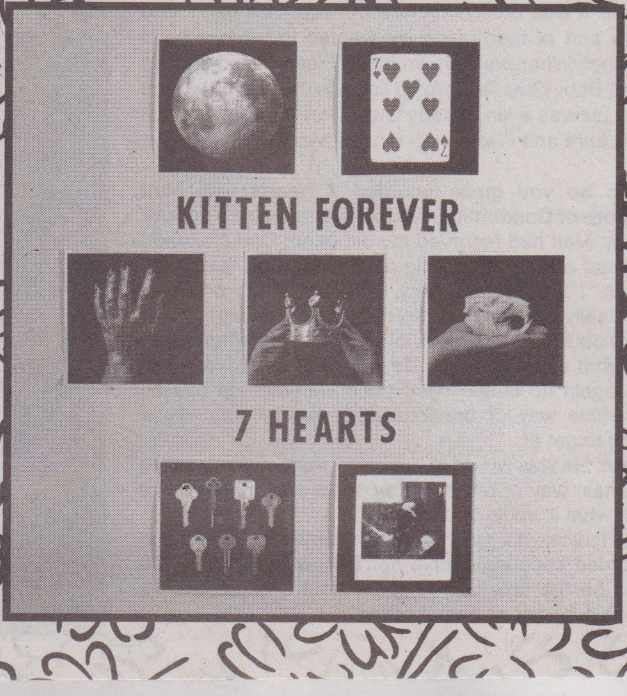
Erica: JD Samson's label, Atlas Chair, is putting out *7 Hearts*. How did you meet up with JD and what's that relationship been like?
Corrie: We met JD a couple years ago. We opened for her band, Men, in Minneapolis, and we just stayed in touch a little bit. The next time we went to Brooklyn, she set us up a show there, and then this summer we played in Asheville opening for Jack Off Jill on their big reunion show out there and JD DJ'd at that event also, and that's how we came to be friends. The last [record] was put out on local Minneapolis label Guilt Ridden Pop, and they had offered to put out this record for us again, but [Keith Moran] specifically said to us "I will put out your next record for you, but I think you should…like, take a new step…" We were trying to figure that out… JD sat down with us and said, "I want to put out your record." After having one conversation with JD about it, we were like, sold on the idea. More and more all the time we are trying to be intentional about working with women and working with other feminists on all our band endeavors, and going through JD to put out the record gave us the connection to get our record mastered by Sarah Register, who's a really awesome producer. Being part of a larger network of working feminist women artists is super important to us. Atlas Chair is run by two women [JD Samson and Inge Colsen] and our record is now mastered by a woman!

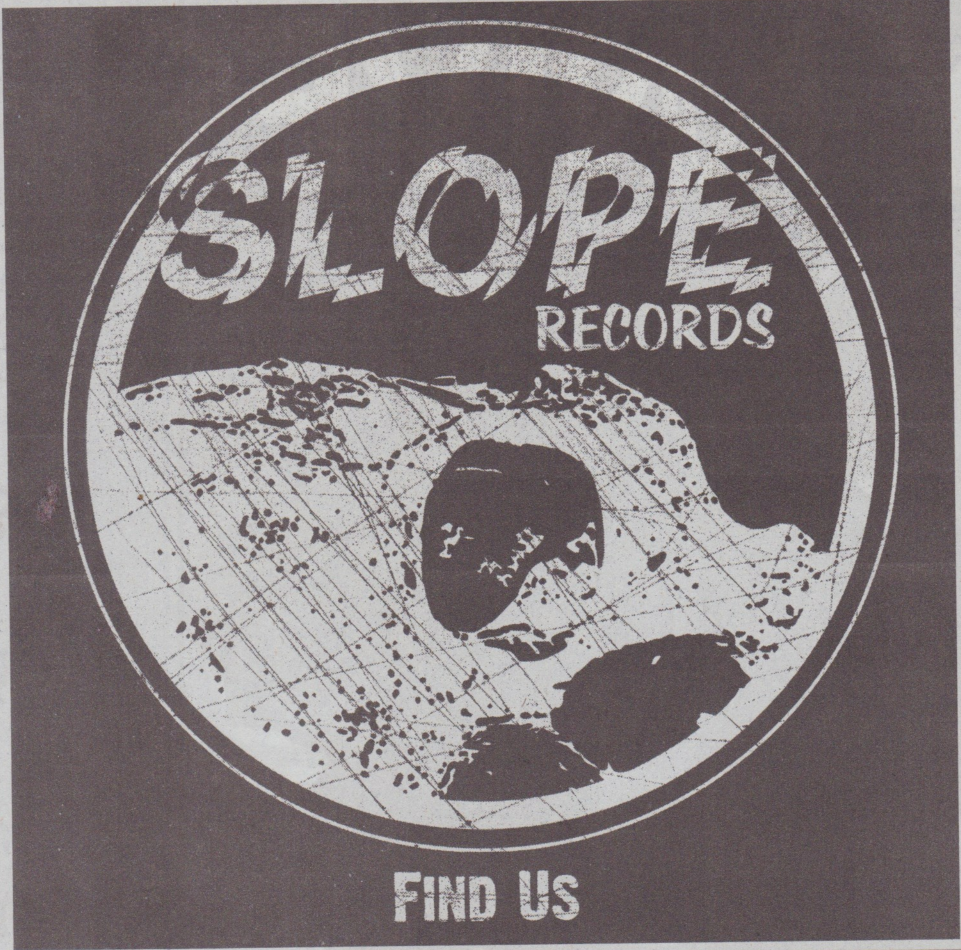
MRR: What is something you guys all talk about a lot when you're together?
[everyone laughs]
Liz: We talk about our bangs all the time!
Corrie: OK, yeah. That is a huge thing we actually all talk about all the time: our hair. And that's maybe embarrassing.

MRR: What was each of your least favorite ages to be?
Laura: They're all terrible! *[laughing]* No, I don't know, when you're old enough to feel independent but still living with your parents. That's kind of a shitty age.
Liz: I think mine was more recent, like twenty four/twenty five. Shit sucked. Shit was really shitty. Aside from whatever is going on in your life, I was just out of art school and I was like, "What the fuck am I dong? What's my job?"
Corrie: To be honest, mine is this year. Being thirty…I didn't graduate until I was almost twenty nine, and so twenty nine / thirty was a really hard time. Turning thirty was weird because like, being thirty and being in a band, there's some kind of internalized pressure that feels like I should have a career, you know? But like the reason I'm not doing that is because I'm in a touring band and I love doing that and in no way do I wish I was teaching English at a community college right now.

MRR: What I want people who haven't seen you play live to know is how much your desire to be a collective shines through….I think it's really special. The audience at your shows is always really obviously happy and in the present moment when you guys are performing. You have an awe-inspiring effect on your audience but you do it without being characters or gurus. It's almost like when you're up there together, you're just being the truest version of yourselves. What is one piece of advice that you'd give to young people who want to perform?
Laura: This is such a silly answer because it's so simple, but just be yourself! There's certainly a lot of bands that are more in it for the performance aspect, but I think if your goal is to connect with the audience, as opposed to lord over them, you have to come from a place of understanding who you are and who your band is. Not letting your ego get in the way of that.
Liz: I'm trying to think about it from the perspective of my youth and I want to be like, "Do whatever the fuck you want!"…but *don't! [laughs]* You'll end up in prison or something…*[everyone laughs]* Go with your gut. That's a very Virgo answer!
Corrie: I think when we started Kitten Forever, it was a thing to like, start a band to hang out and be friends. The intention of that has never really changed. Maybe the scale has changed, and the audience has changed, but our intention hasn't changed. I'm not trying to present any particular kind of talent in an egotistical way. I guess my advice would be to be yourself and find…I once talked to a therapist who told me to "cultivate a village around me," which is one of the most obnoxious things that anyone has ever said to me in my life, but I think that idea of finding your people, you know. That was really important to me when I was younger. Finding other girls who were like me and wanted to talk about the same things I wanted to talk about. At the end of the day, that's what Kitten Forever is. My girlfriends who want to do the same things I want to do. Having that support system around you is one of the most important things you can find when you're younger.

7 Hearts is out now on vinyl and CD
from Atlas Chair Records.
Check out Kitten Forever at kittenforever.bandcamp.com.





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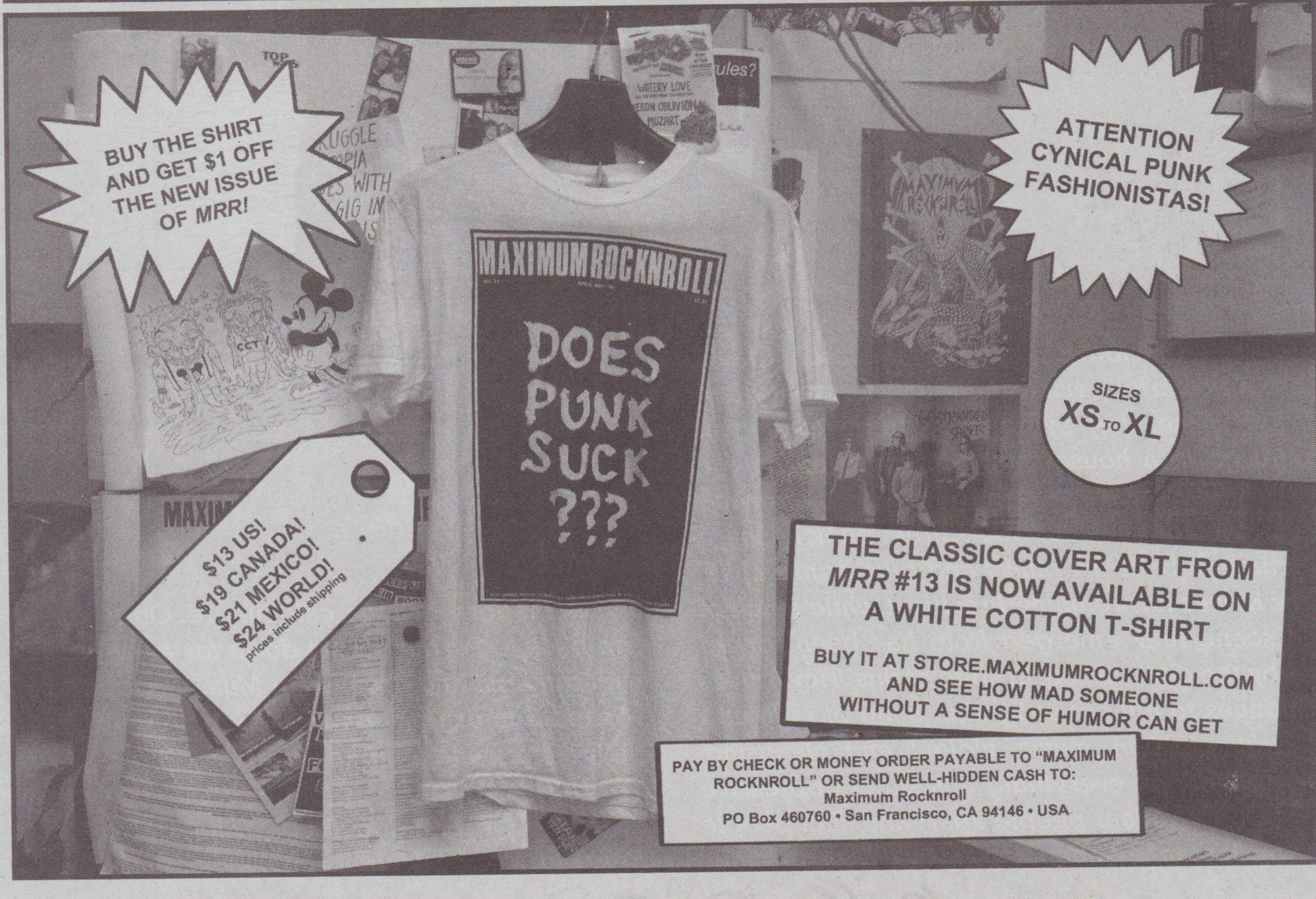

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TINY KNIVES

Portland's Tiny Knives are one of the last holdouts from a powerful period in the city's recent punk past. For me, they symbolize a time when you could go to a house show almost seven days a week and never see the same band twice. Growing out of the now-defunct Cook Street punk house, a onetime hub for art punks and bike punks alike, Tiny Knives has remained resilient while much of the scene they emerged from has been forced out by the city's greed. In spite of this, Tiny Knives continues to put out song after song of rage and frustration. Their music, violent and cleansing, is an attack on everything this shitty oppressive world does to tear people apart and shut people down. It's an emotional purge of the toxicities of this modern hell we call culture. On a recent trip back to Portland, I sat down for a few drinks with guitarist and vocalist Jai Milx, bassist Ursula Morton, and drummer Jamey Anderson to discuss their history and their newest record, Black Haze.

Interview by Brandon Freels. Photos by James Rexroad, Monica Melgar, and Zeke Rogers.

MRR: What brought the three of you together?

Jai: Jamey and I played a little bit of music together in a group that was at Cook Street. The group was Soo Koelbli from Big Black Cloud, Kitty Celeste, Adriane Ackerman, and a bunch of female people. We all played music together a couple times and then nothing came of it. Ursula and I had talked about playing music like a year before. We talked about jamming on some stuff. I was in Popitilopitilus, but I wanted to play my own songs.

Ursula: Bob Jones, who was playing in Popitilopitilus, kept saying, "You should start a band with Jai," and then I'd go and watch her and I'd be like, "Yeah, I'd really be into that."

MRR: And Jamey was in the Vonneguts around this time?

Jai: Popitilopitilus and the Vonneguts had played together, and Jamey moved in around the corner, so we were getting to know each other.

Jamey: We started hanging out a bit. Then I quit the Vonneguts and was bandless for a while.

Jai: We were playing music in the summer with that project at Cook Street, but then when it got to winter I said to Captain Shirt, my partner at the time, "I just really want to start a band with people," and he was like, "What about Jamey and Ursula?"

Ursula: I think Shirt and I met through Bob Jones, too.

MRR: Was there a conscious decision to make Tiny Knives an all female band?

Ursula: Nope.

Jai: It was pretty circumstantial.

MRR: That's interesting because when I lived in Portland, that was the impression I got, and that seemed to be the emphasis.

Jai: I think that emphasis is put on us.

Jamey: For sure.

Jai: I understand that's a point of interest and intersection with people who enjoy our music, and I enjoy seeing all female or queer bands. We actually were initially talking about adding other members, but it's just that the three of us clicked so well and we were making a full enough sound on our own.

Jamey: I had literally not met Ursula until the day we jammed.

Ursula: I had just seen Jamey play in the Vonneguts.

MRR: Is there a backstory to the name Tiny Knives?

Jamey: We were sitting at the Florida Room trying our damnedest to come up with something. We came up with a few that were already taken. We were coming up with some that were terrible, like an-animal-plus-something-else bullshit.

Ursula: I was really into Hawk Moth. It ended up being a metal band from Australia or something.

Jamey: Yeah, we couldn't do it. Any time we'd come up with something cool we'd Google it and find there'd already be a band named that. Like Mirror Mirror was probably my favorite band name. Eventually, I suggested Tiny Knives because I'm a knife nerd and I've had a tiny knives collection for quite awhile.

Jai: I think it was partially inspired by Jamey's tattoo, too. Because Jamey has a little knife tattooed behind her ear.

Ursula: Jamey has a stick and poke that she had long before we were a band. Now we all have tiny knife tattoos that are from a more detailed, ornate drawing that Jai did with fancy jewels and everything. Jai and Jamey have it on their forearms and mine is on my foot.

MRR: How would you describe your band?

Jai: I've started to say we're a heavy band. When we started, I think punk and post-punk were both really comfortable labels for what we were doing, but as we've kept going we've incorporated more elements of metal, hardcore, and noise. I think Eolian, the label we're on, inspired me to start using the word heavy because they're self-described as heavy music. I've started to just say that too because I don't want to say that we're a "punk post-punk hardcore metal band." *[laughs]*

Ursula: I actually like thrashy, sludgy punk. But not "punk metal." *[everyone laughs]*

MRR: Can you list some of the music that has influenced you?

Jamey: I grew up on riot grrrl and hip-hop in equal amounts. And soul.

Ursula: I'm from the Midwest, so I was really into Dow Jones and the Industrials and '70s punk bands from the Midwest. But then one of my favorite bands has always been Mudhoney. When I was younger, I was really into Slayer, Death, Cannibal Corpse, and all these heavy death metal bands.

Jai: I grew up really loving riot grrrl. I discovered Kill Rock Stars when I was fifteen, and I was so pumped and ready to order stuff from them. That definitely was a huge early influence on me. I listen to soul, girl groups, and oldies. And I listen to a lot of R&B these days. But growing up I loved the '77 New York punk bands, the CBGB scene, Richard Hell, Television. Patti Smith was a huge influence. Those were some of the first punk bands that I got into. I loved them because they were so intelligent and irreverent at the same time. And a lot of the punk that was being made in the '90s when I was growing up, especially in upstate New York, was just bro-y hardcore. I had no intersectionality with that whatsoever.

Ursula: I was also obsessed with a lot of Kill Rock Stars bands. Unwound was one of my favorite bands.

Jamey: Budgie from Siouxsie and the Banshees has always been an influence on me as a drummer. All of his tom work and other stuff that he does.

MRR: There's been some talk about sexism within the Portland metal scene. Is that something you all have experienced?

Jamey: It's in the music scene. It's honestly probably less in the metal scene, especially as far as the folks from Eolian go. It's just something you deal with.
Jai: We've been around long enough at this point that we've garnered a certain kind of respect. Sexism is definitely alive and well in this scene. It's something you have to work at being comfortable and confident with because people are going to assume that you don't know what you're talking about. And that's a real ass thing about being a female musician.
Jamey: It's often sound guys. What the fuck is up with sound guys?
Jai: Sexism manifests itself in the fact that we are constantly being reminded about the reality of us being a female band.

MRR: Right, and that's why I wasn't sure about asking you a question like this.
Jai: It's both positive and negative. People who are female, or queer, or trans feel empowered and excited by us being an all female band and empowered to make their own music. I feel so fortunate about that aspect of it. But the other side of it is that people come up to you after you perform and are like, "Whoa, you chicks rule. Like, you totally slayed it." Of course in Portland we get that less. You can walk into a music store here and someone's not going to treat you like an idiot.
Jamey: After we get done playing, there's bewildered surprise from dudes that would have judged us.
Ursula: I tend to be kind of quiet and mysterious or something, and then after shows I get that, but I don't think it has to do with my gender so much as just my personality. I always get people coming up to me after they saw us for the first time and going "Wow! You guys shred."
Jai: I have to say, I don't think male vocalists get bros coming up to them after a show and being like, "That was so raw and vulnerable!" I don't think that happens to male front people. At our last show at the Kenton Club, three different men came up to me and told me, with slight variations of the words, that I was raw and vulnerable. I don't think that happens to Vlad from some black metal group. No one tells him "Man, that was so deep and I just go this impression of you as a vulnerable human being," and then hugs him. I don't think that's happens to male vocalists.

MRR: Why did it take four years to release this album?
Jai: Originally when we started the band, I was bringing a lot of the material, and then we'd finish writing the songs together. I'd have the basic construct of the song. Usually, I'd write the words first, and because I was just getting started, I'd write them on acoustic guitar, then transfer to electric. Over time, and throughout our album *Static*, Ursula started bringing more and more ideas, riffs, and concepts. With this album, Ursula actually generated the bulk of two of the songs, "Winter" and "Dark History." She created the framework and had them pretty much done as far as her part went. We barely tinkered with the structure of those, really.
Jamey: We didn't have to because they were so awesome and complex already.
Ursula: We'd add parts to them. Jai would come up with like a shell of a song, and we'll add a bunch of stuff to it. And Jamey's really good with song structure. But mostly I add the weird parts to everything.
Jai: This album was like pulling teeth for me. I was having trouble coming up with words. I was feeling really creatively blocked immediately after *Static* came out. And so the progress was really slow. In fact, we finished recording this album a year and a half ago, and then there were a bunch of stumbling blocks.
Ursula: It took awhile just to get together the artwork. And I think a lot of it is we usually play so many shows. This is the longest we've gone without playing a show—this period right now. Usually, we're playing so many shows. We're practicing our songs for our shows and then not having enough time to work on new songs.

MRR: Does it come with just being active in life?
Jamey: I think for Ursula and I maybe more so.
Ursula: We work a lot. And Jai travels a lot, too.
Jai: I'm out of town for two or three months out of the year.
Ursula: We already do have like four new songs.
Jai: We have two new songs written and two others that are well on their way.
Ursula: We have a new song that is kind of like, not a concept, but…
Jai: A medley. We're trying to write a multipart song that's like a journey.
Jamey: It's going to be EP length.
Ursula: Like four songs that can stand alone but that are all one song also.
Jai: And linked thematically. The theme is gentrification.
Jamey: Which is appropriate for fucking Portland.

MRR: How did you get involved with Eolian?
Jai: Josh from Eolian came up to both Ursula and I separately. He talked to us about really liking our band and that he was interested in putting out a record. This was very early in the days of him taking over Eolian. He hit the ground running. He's put out several dozen releases in the recent past.

MRR: The way I see it, Eolian is taking on every Portland band I still like.
Jai: They get described a lot in reviews of the label and the bands and stuff, including in one of our reviews, as weird, heavy music.
Jamey: Which is appropriate.
Jai: They're open to non-conforming heavy music.
Jamey: It's nice to have someone with distribution and contacts with promotion.

MRR: Who recorded the album?
Jamey: Caravan Recording. It's Andrew Grosse and Jose De Lara, but Andrew mostly did the recording and Jose did the mastering and mixing.

MRR: Is this Andrew and Jose's portable recording service?
Jai: Yeah, but we did it in a space that Andrew had at the time.
Ursula: The idea of the portable recording is that they can go anywhere. For example, they recorded Oro Azoro in a church. The idea is that they can be mobile if you want to record in your bathroom or your practice space or whatever. But they also have a studio—
Jai: With isolation.

Jamey: —which they have for bands that just want to come to them, like us. And it was awesome. I mean, we've worked with Jose on every single album we've put out and have been happy every time.
Jai: He mastered the first album and was instrumental in recording the other two.
Jamey: Jose paired with Andrew was really amazing because Andrew had some really good ideas about how to mic the drums.

MRR: The first song on the album, "Dark History," is very guttural. It has an almost metal sound to it. The vocals are like something you'd hear on a grindcore record. Is this a new direction for Tiny Knives?
Jamey: It's a progression.
Jai: I feel in some ways we have gotten heavier. For me, it's in experimenting with singing and with delivering in a guttural, intensely unpretty way. I laughingly call it my Cookie Monster vocals. I think a lot of my interests in the beginning laid with the rock'n'roll side of punk, and I didn't know how to play metal or grindcore or other things, but as my musicality has improved I want to experiment. And I think that was intentionally a direction I went in with my vocals, and I'm not even sure that I'll continue. I want to keep doing different things and constantly be incorporating different kinds of music. That's just how I am. I like to write in a lot of different veins.
Jamey: One of the things I love about this band is it's always progressing and changing in the best possible way. I'm never bored when we're writing songs.

MRR: The cover of* Black Haze *is really strikingly different from the other covers. I mean, it's really intense. You have these huge swords.
Ursula: The great sword was a Christmas present from me to Jose and the short sword was a birthday present to me from Jose. The other sword we borrowed from our friend Arolia's son, Dagon.
Jai: Eolian offered us the services of their photographer, James Rexroad. He's a photojournalist. He took amazing pictures of when the conflict in Serbia was happening. He's actually notorious and bankrolled his life for a long time because he took a picture of Kurt Cobain's dead body in Seattle. It was iconic and printed all over the place. So, we had the opportunity to take these pictures. The whole thing was my idea. I wanted to make a departure, something that was very much about us and where we are at right now. I wanted to concretely tell someone this is who we are before they even listened to the music.

MRR: The previous albums, while they had their heavy moments, always had their lighter rock moments. Was there a conscious intent to make this album more cohesive in its sound?
Jai: No, but I'm glad to hear it.
Ursula: "The Fuck" is kind of like a more experimental, noisy song.
Jamey: I don't know, "Silk In The Water" is pretty rock.
Ursula: "Past Tense" is a little more punk than the other songs.
Jai: Well, it's got a post-punk feel to it.
Ursula: I mean, we can do that, where it kind of depends on who we are playing with. If we're playing with a bunch of heavy bands, we can just play a bunch of heavy songs. And if we are playing with more punk bands, we can play our less heavy songs.
Jai: I think that people expect that we are going to continually jump around with styles, but we are constantly working towards making a sound. One thing is that my gear has gotten a lot better. Ursula and Jamey's gear has always been great, but I finally could afford to get a decent amp and some good pedals, instead of like the shitty $30 Metal Zone pedal I was using when we started. So I think as my gear has improved, as well as all of our musicality has improved, we're probably going to be more cohesive in our sound, but I think we're never going to stop trying to branch out and do different things. I think this is a dark album, though, largely because I was feeling really harsh and really dark when we were writing it.

MRR: My favorite song on the new album is "Cowschwitz," which has a kind of monologue in it that reminds me of something Crass would do. Can you talk a little bit about what inspired this song?
Jai: That's actually the only song on the album where all the words were written before we wrote the song. We were on tour and in the van driving through that area that's in-between San Francisco

and Los Angeles, and there's about two miles where there's a bunch of beef lots. I've heard that they are for McDonald's. But they're terrible conditions. It's just shit and mud. Before you get there, you can smell it. You can smell it miles before. And every time you're in a car, even if you roll up the windows and turn off the fan and—

Jamey: Roll up the windows!

Ursula: And in like 90 degree weather.

Jai: Yeah, in the summer time. That was the hottest tour ever. And we were driving through it, and I just got my notebook and I wrote every word of that song. No other song on the album came out that way.

MRR: The name "Cowschwitz" comes from a certain ranch, right?

Jai: See, "Cowschwitz" was something I've heard musicians in our scene in Portland refer to that area as. I was a vegetarian for thirteen years of my life. I eat meat now and I eat it regularly. But the idea of just creating such a shitty world for those animals and then putting it into your body is what inspired the song. At one point in the song I say, "humans create their own pain," and that's like we are making this ugly fucking world and we are making it a part of ourselves, and that's disgusting.

Jamey: I just learned this today, but *schwitzen* is "to sweat" in German, so it's like cow sweat.

MRR: I thought it was in reference to Auschwitz.

Ursula: Yeah, that's the idea.

Jai: I was a little concerned about naming it that because I didn't want it to be triggering to people in regards to the Holocaust. But it's so much what that place is, and it's such an iconic name for that terrible place. That's what it's called and I couldn't change it.

Ursula: I mean, we all eat meat, and we try to eat conscientiously. I was vegetarian for ten years mainly because places like this exist.

MRR: "Cowschitz" is kind of about suffering and pain, but it's a political song. A lot of your earlier songs are about personal suffering. Is there much of a difference for you between writing political or personal material?

Jai: Well, going back to the new stuff we're working on about gentrification, I realized conversations I was having were about this issue daily. I went to Oakland for nine days and every time I'd go to a party, that's the conversation I'd be having. I need to be putting this into my art. I need to be channeling this, because it's destroying me. It's paining me to watch other people's struggles and to experience my community being dispersed and to be consistently affected by this menacing yuppie monstrosity. I identify as an anarchist, and for me, isolating the personal from the political experience is a very foolish road. My intersectionality with radicalism is about empathy. About being like: oh my god, these people are oppressed every day of their lives! People of color and queers—on a daily basis, these people struggle in a very real way. Anyone who is like "I'm an oppressed person, I'm a woman, I'm queer, I'm a person of color, and I go out there on the street and I experience that every time I leave my house in some way," to me that's one of the most important things to the pathos of that and trying to have relationships with other people in the face of that, both romantic and friendly and just in the world. It's so difficult and it carries so much weight. And to me, there really is no separating the two.

MRR: When I listen to other bands who are political, and when I listen to musicians who are personal, they are usually one or the other, and there's really few who can get that right in the middle, and I think you do that very well.

Jai: I think that holding an immense amount of anger over the world that we live in being so fucked is a giant driving force in why I make my music. It took me years to isolate and appreciate that anger, to actually acknowledge it for what it is. I didn't want to be an angry mad person and, because I had a lot of self-esteem and depression issues, I was suppressing it and turning it against myself. Playing this music is incredibly cathartic to me because it allows me to channel other people's and my own feelings of dysphoria and frustration with being in this world. It allows me to get it outside of my body in a very primal way. One of my new friends told me when he saw our band play this summer, it was like watching an exorcism, and I was really flattered by that. In some ways I'm trying to make the space as safe as possible and just clear that out of my system and out of anyone's system that wants to feel that and is listening.

MRR: Can you talk about "Silk In the Water"?

Jai: A lot of people don't know this, but I also play pretty acoustic music. And as we've been writing more guttural songs, to use your word from earlier, it's been really challenging for me to play those songs, because my voice is gone half the

time. “Silk In The Water” is a song that I wrote when I was maybe twenty-two years old. It was years and years ago. I wrote the basis of it, but it was a totally different song, and then Ursula and I went to work on it, hacked it into pieces, and then put it back together. That song was our albatross.

Jamey: We reworked it and reworked it and reworked it.

Jai: It was the hardest song on the album for us. We’ve done a lot of down tempo, prettier songs. “Ocean of Static Sky” on *Static* is a good example. That’s a very personal song, but “Silk In The Water” is more intentionally generalized. One of the central themes of that song is “I’m eating myself from the inside, and I’m corroding myself from inside” and the “Silk In The Water” name comes from a line that goes “silk in the water, dreams cannot keep their color.” There’s this idea that over time the world just wears people down and ruins them and dissipates their most central identity and force. That’s loosely what I was talking about, but the lyrics are pretty oblique. But that’s personally where I was coming from when I originally wrote that song. And as we re-worked it, at the end I tried to make it a little more triumphant. The last words of the song are “decimate, let it rise.” It’s just trying to clear that and then allow health to come up from a ruined place.

MRR: I think culturally we usually don’t associate healing with violent, abrasive music.

Jai: We need to tear down innumerable things in our world to create a world where anyone can be a healthy person. And what I mean by healthy isn’t about eating kale everyday, but it’s about being a well-balanced person who isn’t carrying the ills of society as a sickness in their body. We have so much work to do as individuals and as a culture to even create a world where people can grow up and not be ruined by our culture. Everyone that I’m close with has suffered from being a person in this world in a very real and primal way.

Jamey: I think thinking about the way you’re interacting with the world, and how the world affects you, is fucking healthy. And Jai’s lyrics are helping people think about that.

Jai: I don’t know if they can hear them, though. *[laughs]*

MRR: You also include two songs on* Black Haze *from your first album: “Magic Christians” and “Lights in the Sky.” Why re-record songs from four or five years ago?

Jai: I was the one who wanted to rewrite those songs. I had always felt like those two songs got the shaft in our first recording because “Magic Christians” was so guttural and predated our sound being dialed in, as far as being heavy goes. Our first album was a lot airier than this one.

Ursula: Also, I was going to say that we changed both of those songs. We revamped them.

Jai: And for “Magic Christians,” I just felt that song deserved a spotlight because it’s a song that’s always been in our sets. We may not play it all the time, but we’ve revisited it and come back to it. And I felt that song needed some tweaking. I felt like it fit in with the other stuff we were playing, and we revamped it and reworked it and changed the middle pretty significantly. And I changed some of the things I was doing. As far as “Lights In The Sky” goes, though, that was a song that dissatisfied me the most of all the songs we ever recorded. It was a slightly flubby recording. We went with the take, even though it wasn’t the best. It was when we were first getting started.

Jamey: Was it the second song we ever recorded?

Jai: I wrote it years before I moved to Cook Street. It was the second song I brought to the band. The reason I wanted to revisit “Lights In The Sky” was because that song was about an experience I had being in an emotionally abusive relationship. It’s about being in Belgium and having an incredibly bad time and being shouted at out on the street by this person. I wanted to revisit it because I thought that it was obvious to some extent from the lyrics what was going on, but I wanted to make it *incredibly* obvious, because I don’t think when people see me, or talk to me, or know me, they would expect I would have been in that kind of situation. I ended up writing this song and using it as a way to get past that experience and the trauma surrounding that. I was so dissatisfied with the recording and I saw an opportunity to tweak the lyrics a little bit and make them more obvious. I added a number of lyrics but one of them that I added was “I know you’ve been abused, but it isn’t an excuse, you don’t know the way to break the cycle and change.” I wanted to revisit that because I think abuse is a very real thing that a lot of people survive and struggle with. I experience PTSD from that relationship, and I wanted to make that incredibly obvious and make it clear that is what the anger in the song is generating from and what the desire for moving past and healing was generating from.

MRR: What’s the future for Tiny Knives?

Jamey: It’s kind of up to Jai. She’s threatening to move away.

Jai: I want to move somewhere I can buy a house, and that place is *not* Portland, Oregon. But I’m really stoked about writing this new cycle of songs. I keep joking about *Abbey Road* and the Paul McCartney songs, but I want to combine a bunch of songs into one sonic piece that are all really different and represent all of the different styles we have but that are all recognizing oppression and the way that is playing out around us. Calling out yuppies, of course, but also recognizing your own place in the web of gentrification.

Jamey: Yep.

Jai: And I feel incredibly passionate about that as a human being, and I feel really excited about working on that as a band.

Jamey: Me too.

Jai: That’s the immediate future, but long term future: we’re family, and I hope we play music together until we die.

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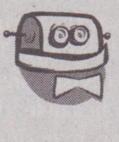

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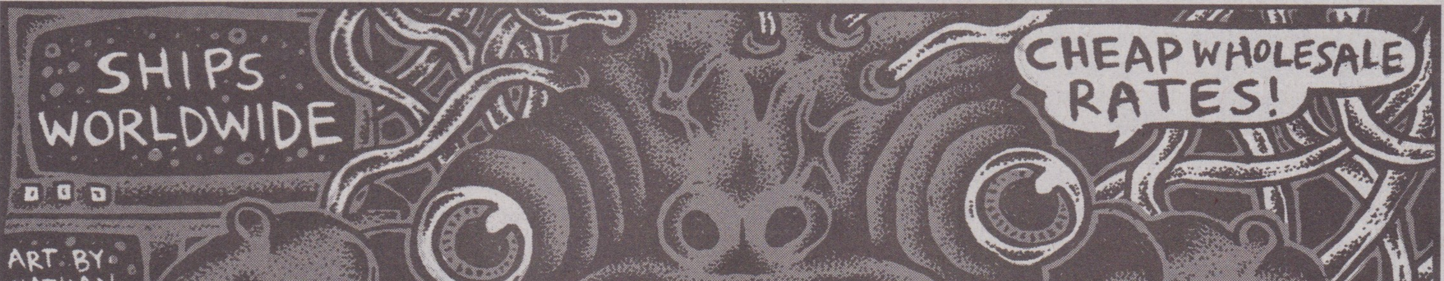
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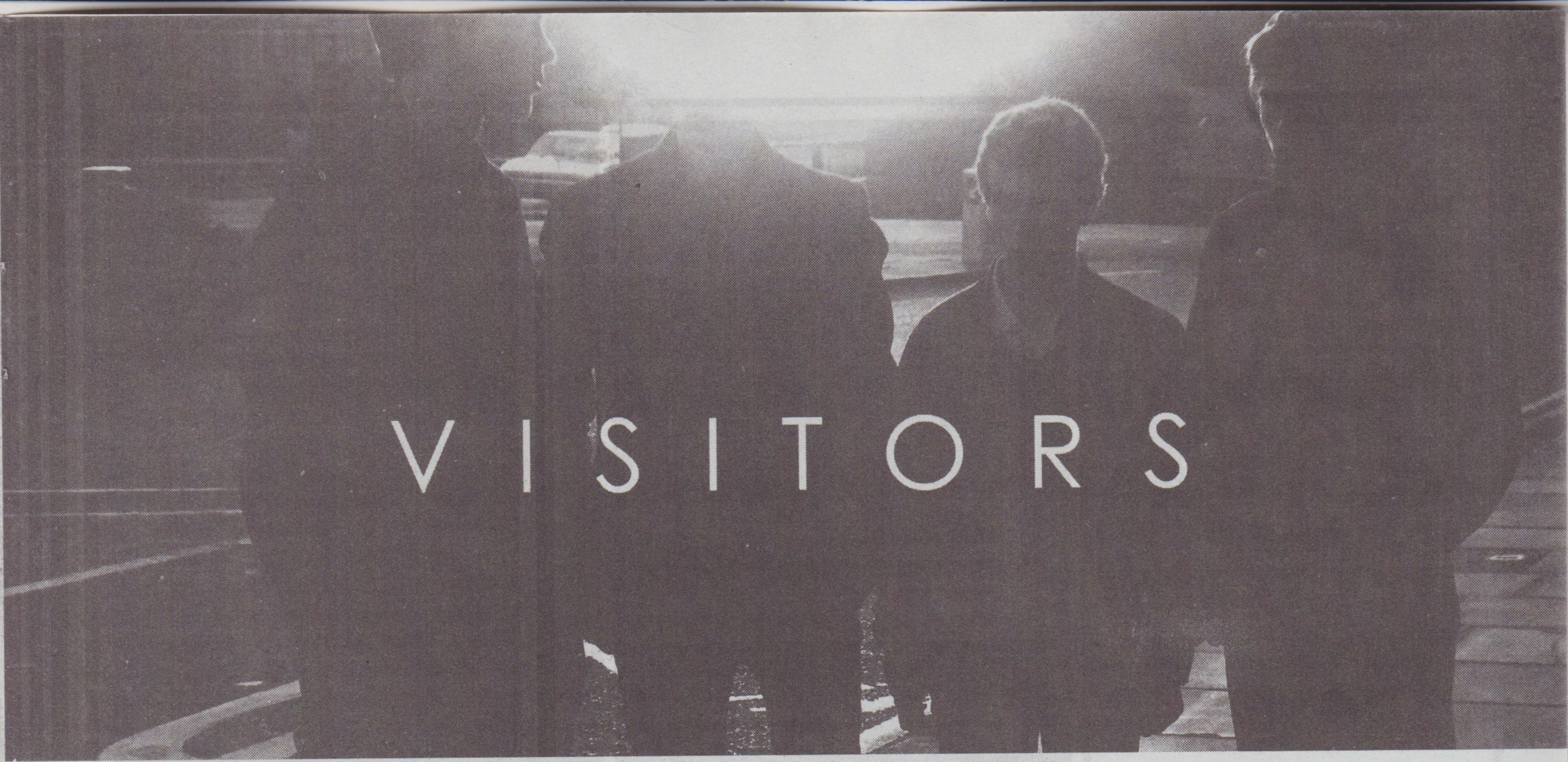


VISITORS

In their brief lifetime, Edinburgh's Visitors popped in and disappeared like a flash. Formed in the late 1970s by brothers John and Derek McVay, school friend Colin Craigie, and rotating drummers Alan Laing and Keith Wilson, the group sparked a fuse with their rightfully titled debut single, 1979's Electric Heat. *This instant classic caught the ear of BBC's godhead DJ John Peel, who financed their second single (1980's* Empty Rooms *and welcomed them for a series of Peel Sessions resulting in a third single (1981's* Compatibility*).*

Visitors' twitchy guitars, rattletrap electronics, discordant grooves, and droning vocals are perfectly emblematic of the era, but this was also a group with great songs. Though they dressed down in eerie minimalism, the quartet had a knack for melody and musicality. From the scorching "Electric Heat" to the static dance of "Our Glass," PILstyle propulsion of "Compatibility" and Wire-y claustrophobia of "Pattern", these could all be cult classics. Alongside themes of paranoia and unrequited love, the band's signature moment might be the insistent sevenminute anthem "Poet's End" or the creeping horror of "Visitors" (ending with a shouted warning of "footsteps coming towards your door!").

Sadly, as the musical histories of Edinburgh and Glasgow continues to be mined, Visitors are yet to be celebrated alongside contemporaries like Orange Juice, Josef K, and the Fire Engines. Before signing to 4AD for a debut album that never saw the light of day, Visitors shared a stage with the Cure, the Clash, and New Order. Hearing their music and learning of these accomplishments, it seems unfathomable that both Simon Reynolds' exhaustive postpunk book Rip It Up and Start Again *and the scenespecific documentary* The Sound of Young Scotland *failed to even mention their name.*

Thankfully we now have Poet's End, *a Visitors compilation from Toronto's Telephone Explosion Records which aims to right these historical wrongs. Founding frontman John McVay cleared up some of the questions on his unjustly overlooked group.*

Interview and introduction by Jesse Locke.

MRR: How did the band come together? Was it just you and your brother at first?

Colin, Derek, and I had a "garage band" from '76, playing covers as we tried to learn more than three major chords. Our drummer Alan joined in '77 when we morphed into a punk band called the Deleted. Like many, the first Clash, Buzzcocks, ATV, Television, and Jam albums were key influences alongside earlier ones of Lou Reed, the Velvet Underground, and David Bowie.

MRR: What was the scene like in Edinburgh at that time? Were there venues that became the hub of activity or artists you would consider contemporaries?

Edinburgh was in many ways better than Glasgow for venues. It had a range of midlarge halls/discos and nightclubs that soon started putting on gigs and all of the above played there as well as a busy Art College and Uni scene. But the best thing was many small pubs that put on gigs, like the infamous Tap O' Lauriston and the Wig and Pen where most weekends you could see a new band for the price of a pint.

There was always a more diverse and less American pop influenced music scene in Edinburgh. There were many, many bands, but they often only lasted a few weeks. But key fellow travelers would be the Scars, the Fakes, and later on, Gallery Macabre and the Tears.

MRR: It seems that John Peel became a fan pretty quickly. Did it take a lot of effort to get your music to him or did he find it on his own?

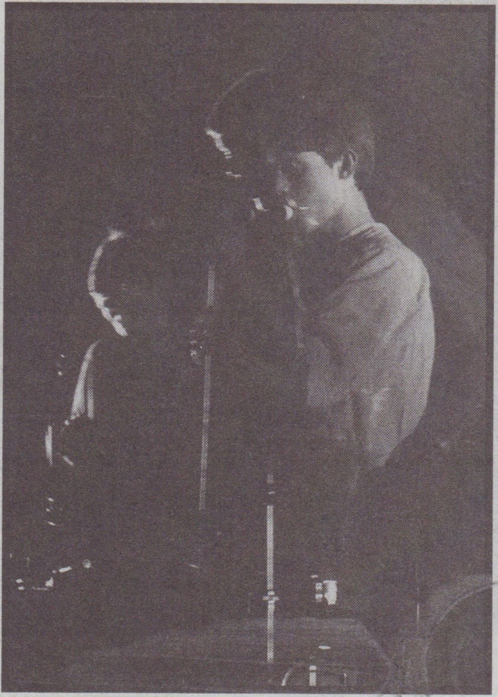
We sent him the first single. He asked us to join him for a half of "pissy lager" and then we got a session. He became—as he did for many others—a real friend to the band, and the Peel Sessions were often the difference between eating or not for a couple of weeks, as you got paid for the sessions and then royalty payments later. In this way he helped loads of bands to survive. This helped people like ourselves from modest background—i.e. we were skint—to pursue our music and gave much needed exposure.

MRR: What was your experience like working with him and recording the Peel Sessions?

John never came to the recordings, but would often meet before or after—again for a half of pissy lager. The quality of the BBC studios and engineers, compared to what we could normally afford, made it feel like an Aladdin's cave, but you only had one day to do the session—often a very long day.

MRR: In a 1980 article written about the band for *Sounds*, you said "There's more passion in this band than there is with me and my girlfriend in bed!" How did you lose yourself in the music, both onstage and in your recordings?

Ah, the folly of youth. Given we were gigging a lot, I'm not surprised, as I seldom saw my girlfriend of the time. We had a singular view that we wanted to always try to do new songs, new styles, new settings every time we played. So that takes a lot of effort. We didn't bash out the same set night after night. While not being punk music, we subscribed to the idea that doing something new kept us fresh and made it more interesting for audiences, even when it



didn't work or go as we planned. That led us to doing our own gigs in new venues with new bands and contemporaries such as Josef K, the Pratts, the Scars, and many others I can't remember—sorry, guys!

MRR: You also talked about how you found that passion by rallying against things you hated. What sorts of things did you hate at the time, and have your views softened since then?
Hate wasn't really what was going on. Some of the songs are love songs or the lack of love songs—"Empty Rooms," "Compatibility." We found the world to be pretty boring, conservative, and bleak at the end of the '70s in Scotland. It's also the absolute duty of all seventeen/eighteen-yearolds to be unsatisfied with the status quo.

MRR: With the ongoing popularity of Scottish postpunk bands like Orange Juice, Josef K, and the Fire Engines, why do you think you've been so overlooked over the years?
All those bands were and are great. The difference is that they got record deals that got them to a wider audience and made sure they could pay the rent. That in itself tells you why we were often overlooked and why this record is hopefully going to let a few more people be interested in what we were doing or trying to do.

MRR: Is it a point of pride to think of yourselves as one of the great lost postpunk bands?
That is for others to judge. We tried to make good music in our own way, in an interesting way, and keep it fresh for us and those who came to our gigs.

MRR: That same *Sounds* article mentions a compilation of other overlooked artists that you were working on. Who was on it and was it ever released?
We had plans for developing our own label and talked to many Edinburgh bands about that. In the end, lack of time and money killed that idea.

MRR: Did you play with the Cure more than once, or other big bands at the time? Was that experience as bad as it sounded in the article?
We supported the Cure and Classic Nouveau once at the Dominion In London. At that time, the supporting band often had to pay to play. This was fine if you were signed, as the label would cough up. We weren't, and all the cash we got went on getting to the gig, paying the fuel, etc. We also supported the Clash (who hung around to watch our sound check and gave us their rider), the Associates, and New Order in Edinburgh on their first tour of Scotland at Valentino's. According to others, we blew them off the stage and still have the live recording. Over a couple of years we supported the Adverts on their Scottish tour, the Skids, the Ruts, the Rich Kids, Delta 5...

MRR: The *Sounds* piece also mentions that you were all working day jobs while playing in the band, which obviously still continues for many musicians. How were you able to balance that? Did your jobs eventually win out?
Day jobs were part-time and we all often had a lot of sick days!

MRR: What eventually caused the end of the band? Have you continued with other musical projects in the years since then?
The band signed to 4AD, but this precipitated a break up of the key creatives and the singular chemistry that created the sound. Ivo, we're sorry, it would have been a great album.

We signed to 4AD around about the same time as the Cocteau Twins and played a few gigs with them—one in London at the ICA. Around this time, Colin and Keith—the original guitarist and drummer, respectively—decided that they wanted to move on and left the band. In spite of attempts to get replacements who could not only play the "set," we had difficulty finding people who could also write/compose in the style we wanted. Had fun messing around with new ideas, but it just didn't work out and it was decided to call it a day.

After that experience, some of us formed other bands or played in other bands, but it was never the same. That is why this album will be a nice final chapter to the project that was Visitors. Thankfully, now that this is published, the many people who track us down asking for more recordings will be able to get them at the quality they deserved.

Poet's End *is available from Telephone Explosion: telephoneexplosion.com.*

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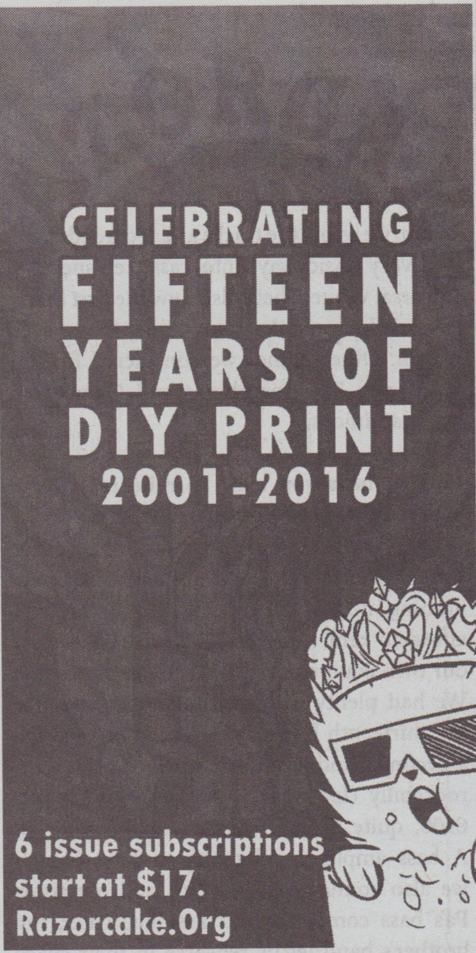

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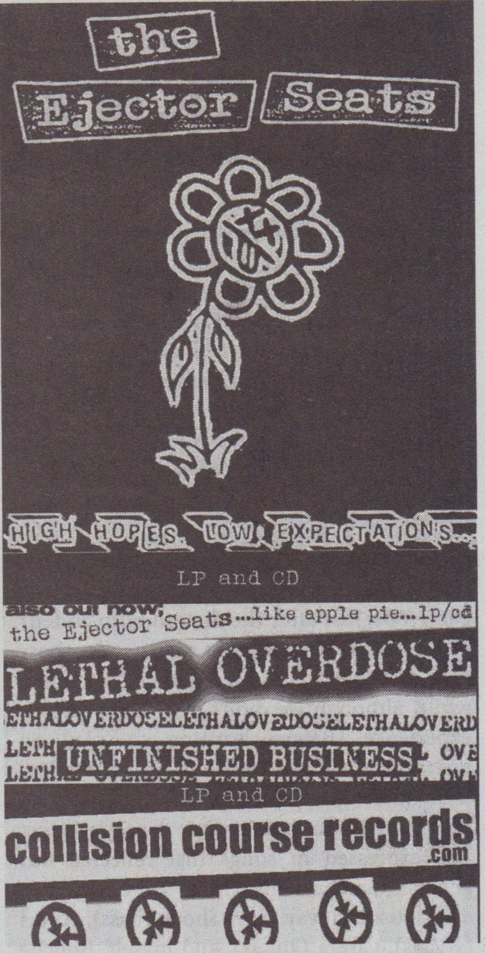

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FRENOPATICSS

Until recently, Frenopaticss were Barcelona's best-kept punk secret of 1980. With the reissue by Vomito Punk Rock Records of their one and only recording, a demo EP, the band has resurged explosively from its ashes. We talk to Bolo Solo about how it all began…

Interview and introduction by Victor Vomito.
Photos provided by Bolo Solo.
Translation by Nika.

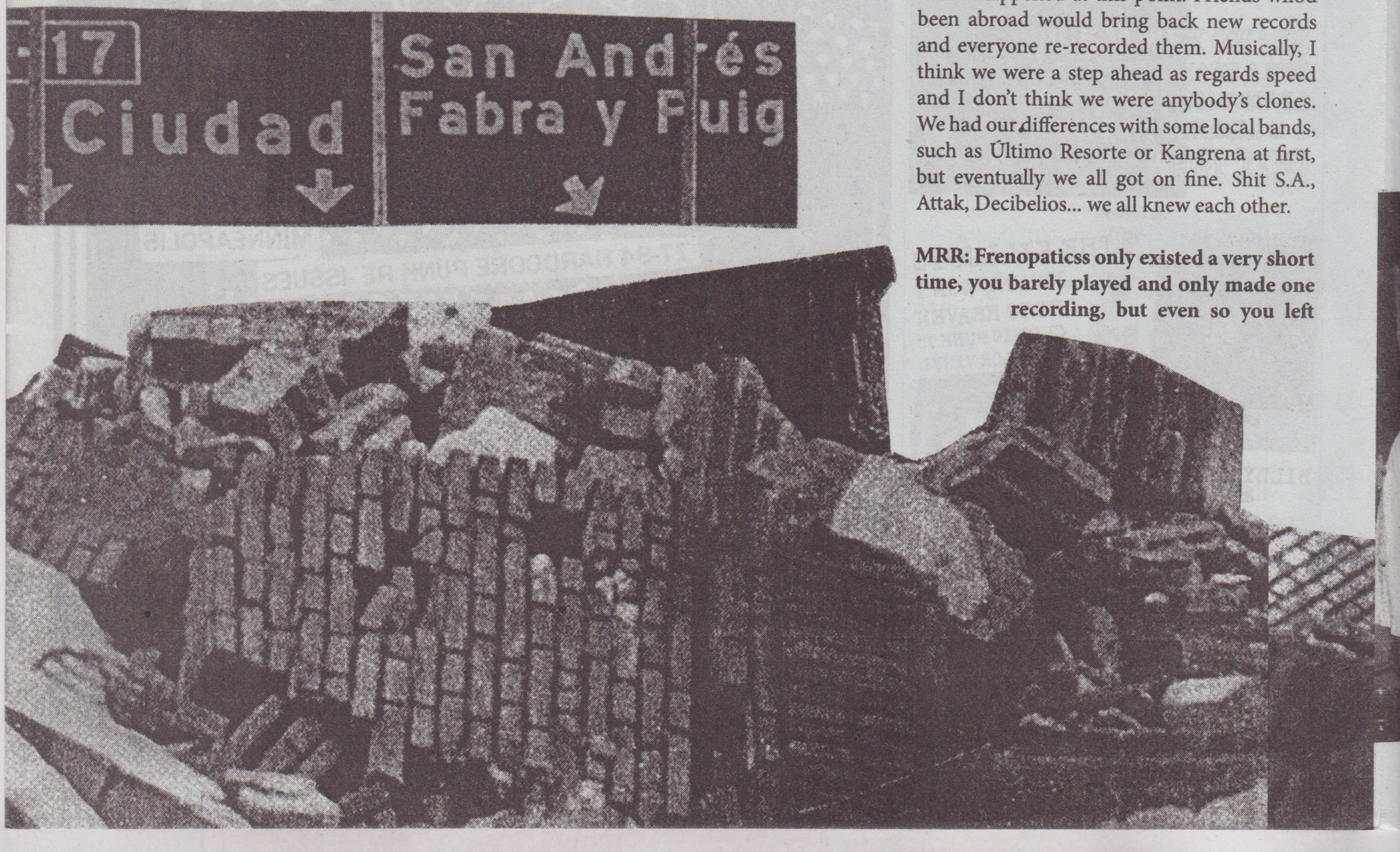
MRR: Tell us a little about the band. What made you start a punk rock group in the early '80s, just after the dictatorship ended?
The band, as was usually the case in those days, had been coming together for quite a while, although we didn't have any previous experience. Before learning to play an instrument, or even owning any, all we had were ideas, the desire to do something to escape the monotony. Our teenage anger was expressed in songs that reflected our general dissatisfaction in a self-destructive and antisocial way. Xavi Shock (bass), Angel (vocals), Cirera (guitar), and myself, Boliche (drums), comprised the eventual Frenopaticss lineup; we wrote the tracks and recorded them in a very basic way onto cassette tape at a rehearsal venue. That's also how the first batch of Barcelona punks had made themselves known. Other names we considered for the band were Destripacabinas and Gamberros Amfetamínicos.

MRR: I hear you used to rehearse in the bathroom at your house…is that true?
Yes, it's true. But only at first. Unlike other bands from that time, we had absolutely nothing, no resources at all, and we couldn't afford to rent a place to rehearse in or buy our own equipment…It was all very insecure. We had plenty of ideas, but no means. For my thirteenth birthday, my mother gave me a second-hand drum kit she'd bought off a rockabilly (for what would now be around €100, quite a lot of money in those days). A bass amplifier belonging to Xavi (which we also connected a mic to) and my sister Pa's bass completed our first kit. Later, my brother's band let us rehearse in their space and use their equipment.

MRR: Before you'd played a single concert, and with hardly any repertoire, you became known through some articles in *El Periódico* newspaper rather than for your music. Why was this?
Nowadays there's a lot of skepticism about information published in newspapers—whether it's true or not, or who's behind it—but in the '80s in Spain, everyone believed without question what they read in the papers, they didn't check their information… The so-called "urban tribes," which is how the press labeled the various expressions of youth culture, were the victims of this type of reporting. We demonize what we don't understand, and thanks to a few unfortunate comments and photos in which we looked aggressive, Frenopaticss got a bad name, but at the same time we became known nationally…without having recorded a single track! An interview in *Interviu* magazine and another in a supplement to the Sunday edition of *El Periódico de Catalunya* featuring new bands meant we became well known, at least by name.

MRR: Which bands influenced you? And which bands did you feel more in synch with in Barcelona?
We mainly listened to UK bands such as Discharge, Epileptics, UK Subs, and Partisans, as well as the Ramones and the Dead Kennedys. The worldwide punk explosion hadn't happened at this point. Friends who'd been abroad would bring back new records and everyone re-recorded them. Musically, I think we were a step ahead as regards speed and I don't think we were anybody's clones. We had our differences with some local bands, such as Último Resorte or Kangrena at first, but eventually we all got on fine. Shit S.A., Attak, Decibelios… we all knew each other.

MRR: Frenopaticss only existed a very short time, you barely played and only made one recording, but even so you left



your mark on an entire generation. What do you remember from that period? What were the best things from then?
I remember that everything seemed totally gray despite how young I was, almost a kid. Getting to know all my sister's friends, with the way they looked, what they had to tell, gave color to my life. I think we lived in a separate world. I was comfortable being myself without having to explain myself to anyone. We lived through some terrible things, a lot of violence, but I always prefer to think about the good stuff. Just playing a gig was a challenge, you never knew how it would end. Adrenaline was always at 100%.

MRR: What do you remember about your first concert?
It was total chaos. It was an anti-NATO street festival with other bands of different musical styles and it ended in hunt-the-punk. There were fights and everybody ran for it.

MRR: You recorded the same demo four times; can you tell us a little about this?
We only had seven songs, the ones on the EP. We all plugged into the vocalist's PA and recorded onto cassette tape. Each band member had a copy, but only mine made it anywhere. Thanks to Ritxar from the Hard-cross distributor it got to Chris at Bad Compilation Tapes and we appeared on the *Spanish Hardcore* compilation. From then on we became a little known internationally, whereas before we were only recognized locally.

MRR: What was the secret of the explosive and chaotic punk of the '80s? How important were those years and what was their impact on later generations?
The fact that we had to fight, to find our own way, and call things as we saw them. We were sick of it all, basically. We had to start everything, from getting a band together, to setting up a concert, to publishing a fanzine... punks from all over Spain (and outside) got to know each other and we created our own totally self-managed channels. Everything was made by and for ourselves.

MRR: Do you think things have been exaggerated over time?
A little. There used to be attitude; years later, everything has become more clone-like, easier...even the subject matter for songs. Back then, a band was a means of self-determination, of showing yourself as you were, not so much just for entertainment.

MRR: Why did Frenopaticss break up?
Xavi Shock's enforced military service was a severe blow that drew us apart, but it was his death, too soon, too young that really caused it...

MRR: After Frenopaticss broke up, you started SK and Angel started GRB, both bands that left their mark on an entire generation. Although Frenopaticss was around such a short while, would you say it served a purpose? Experience, for instance?
After Frenopaticss, I spent some time with the first line-up of Exterminio and later with Shit S.A. An attempt to start up a new band called Hardcore Rabieta brought the future members of Subterranean Kids together, and we started doing stuff at the Conde del Asalto venue. The rest is history...

The Frenopaticss EP is available from vomitopunkrockrecords.com.

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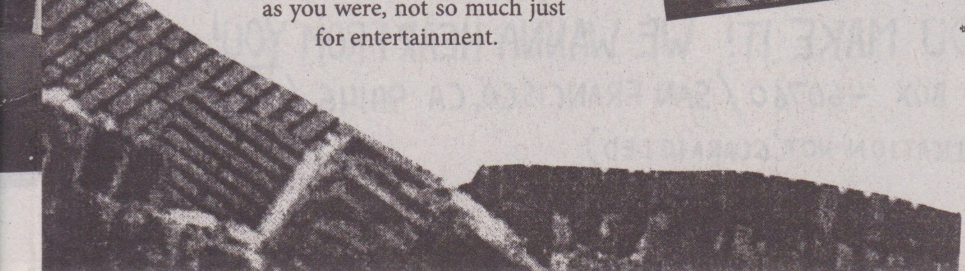

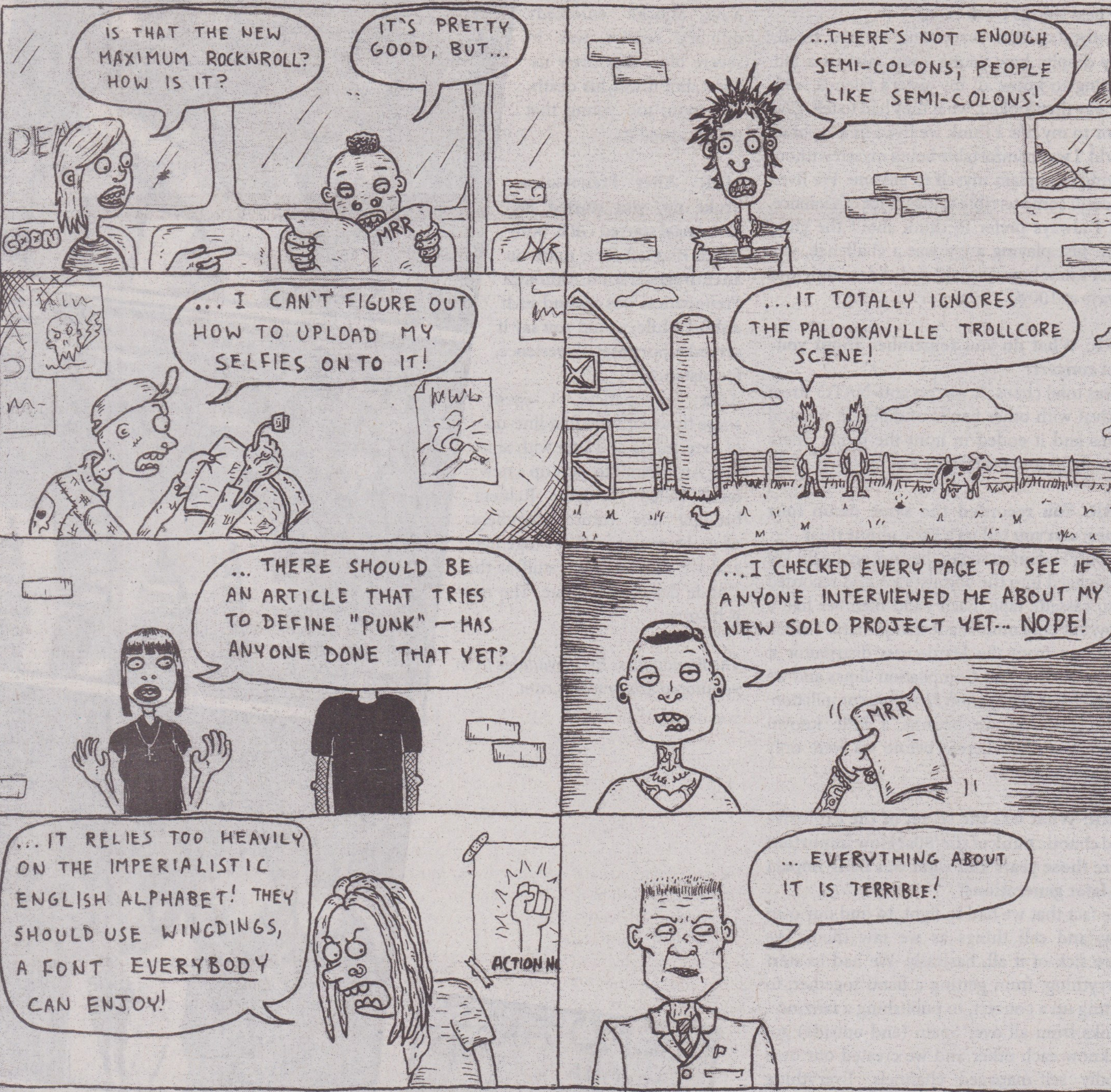
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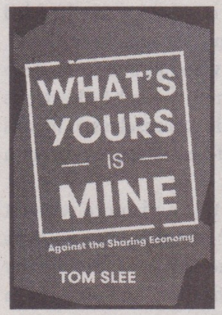


What's Yours Is Mine: Against the Sharing Economy
Tom Slee
OR Press
$18.00 | 212 pages

The concept of sharing is inherently radical. Sharing means looking out for each other. It means providing for someone with no expectation of return. Helping others when you can, on the basis of fostering community. It challenges consumerism and fights capitalism's systemic inequality. Sharing is part of punk. Sharing is trading tapes, letting a band crash on your floor, letting someone catch a free ride in your van for a couple of days. Sharing is zine libraries, collective houses, sliding scales and basement shows and potlucks.

The "sharing economy" has nothing to do with sharing. Many of us know this. It's bullshit marketing jargon; a comically off-point umbrella term recently used to describe Uber, Airbnb, Taskrabbit, Handy, and similar corporations, ones that maintain a facade of allowing everyday people to "share" their time and resources (like their cars and homes) in order to "make a few extra bucks." These businesses often trick workers and consumers alike into thinking that this model creates a culture of sustainability and community-mindedness, but in reality, the opposite is true. "Sharing economy" companies, which often rely on apps and social media platforms, make millions of dollars for executives, software engineers, and marketing teams as actual workers and communities suffer. The sharing economy creates new models of capitalistic exploitation where even more risks, liabilities, and expenses are thrown at workers who are already in potentially unstable situations.

One of Tom Slee's motivations for writing *What's Yours Is Mine: Against the Sharing Economy*—published in February of this year—was to push back against people in the tech industry appropriating the language of "collective action and progressive politics" for private financial gain. "I wrote this book because the Sharing Economy agenda appeals to ideals with which I and many others identify; ideals such as equality, sustainability, and community," he writes. "The Sharing Economy continues to have the support and allegiance of many progressive-minded people…[but evokes] those ideals to build massive private fortunes, to erode real communities, to encourage a more entitled form of consumerism, and to create a future that is more precarious and more unequal than ever."

Uber is at the forefront of this perverse new labor model, capitalizing on unprotected work and disguising it as empowering for autonomous workers, who are called "contractors" instead of "employees." When Uber classifies its workers as independent contractors, it means they don't have to pay for insurance, they don't have to pay for sick leave, and they don't need to meet employment standards or follow certain labor laws. Uber likes to encourage a myth of profitability for workers—that its drivers make significantly more than taxi drivers—but once you factor in the costs of insurance, gas, and certain repairs (all of which fall on the driver), the idea that Uber drivers make more than taxi drivers is plainly false. The labor conditions of the sharing economy remove "protections and assurances won by decades of struggle," Slee writes.

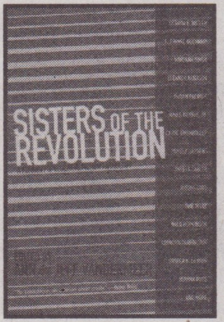
One of the book's most compelling chapters is its discussion of "reputation systems"—perhaps the sharing economy's most dystopian element—where workers are monitored by "algorithmic regulation" AKA ratings provided by customers to monitor and sometimes "deactivate" workers. These reputation systems put more pressure and emotional labor on workers and are a new form of surveillance, Slee argues. "Sharing Economy reputation systems have become fronts for hierarchical and centralized disciplinary systems…For the community, and for the notions of sharing which the Sharing Economy is supposed to be bringing back, reputation systems are turning us into a society of snitches, giving us the ability to casually turn in our fellow citizens to a strict and unaccountable form of discipline."

Slee's book provides much needed historical context on the sharing economy phenomenon: a history of digital "openness" being leveraged for private profit as well as a history of the commodification of the internet, pointing out key moments in time where legislation changed to first allow commercial activity on the web. "There was vociferous argument over the ethics of pursuing profit over the internet," he writes. It's a book about the sharing economy, but also more: it's about how we got to this conflicting place where we all are seemingly beholden to commercial platforms that we don't totally understand, mined for data by corporations profiting from users' micro-work.

Slee makes a solid argument against technological solutionism: "There are no easy fixes to complex social problems, and even less so for real conflicts and injustices that permeate society." He reminds us that there have been movements to fight against companies like Uber: lawsuits, protests, coalitions forming to protect workers' rights. These had led to some tangible results, like UberPOP being made illegal in Paris after 2014 taxi driver protests.

If it seems that the current conditions of economic injustice under global capitalism could not possibly be worse, the sharing economy suggests otherwise. The exploitative realities of the sharing economy are particularly terrifying during a time when creeps in every field are trying to figure out how to become "The New Uber of Their Industry!™" Fuck that. *What's Yours Is Mine* is a good place to start if you want to understand how these corporations work, to develop a vocabulary for picking them apart and shouting back.

—Liz Pelly



Sisters of the Revolution: A Feminist Speculative Fiction Anthology
Ann and Jeff Vandermeer
PM Press
$15.95 | 341 pgs

What is speculative fiction? Or more precisely, how does it differ from science fiction? While there is some overlap between sci-fi and speculative fiction (both stay in the realm of the imagined), speculative fiction tends to have more elements of fantasy, horror, and "weird tales" (think HP Lovecraft and Edgar Allen Poe). Instead of conveying an entire new world, the magical elements are often very subtle. The true mark of speculative fiction? You're not always aware of it, but after reading, you can feel something has crept under your skin.

Sisters of the Revolution offers an exciting foray into this world of feminist speculative fiction, giving us a diverse range of short stories. As you might expect, many of the better choices come from already established authors such as Octavia Butler, Angela Carter, James Tiptree Jr., and Ursula K. Le Guin.

Octavia Butler's haunting short story "The Evening and the Morning and the Night" (one of the strongest in the collection) is about people with a genetic disease that makes them violent towards others and themselves and raises questions about mental health, Social Darwinism, and disabilities.

James Tiptree Jr.'s "The Screwfly Solution" was also interesting and provocative and still relevant enough to warrant republication. Many of the other stories, such as "The Palm Tree Bandit" and "The Fall River Axe Murders" were well-done but felt like they would've been more at home in a feminist fairytale or myth anthology. The weakest offerings in the group tended to have a tenuous connection to both speculative fiction and feminism and were more like supernatural *Twilight* stuff ("Gestella," the story of a werewolf/pet girl, comes to mind).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, my favorite stories in the collection were those that were visceral and centered on the body. Hiromi Goto, who I was already familiar with through her excellent and weird novel *The Kappa Child*, gave us the "Tales from the Breast," a decidedly unromanticized, disgusting, and painful take on motherhood. She managed to destroy the image of the happy, devoted mother and at the same time reveal the hypocrisy of the father who feels free to criticize her but would never want to bear the same burden and knows biology means he will never have to (unless he's trapped in a speculative fiction story!).

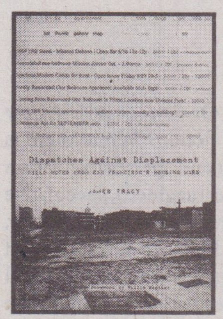
Another favorite was Karin Tidbeck's "Aunts," supposedly a meditation on the passage of time. The imagery Tidbeck painted was completely spellbinding—a story of three giant aunts and their nieces who bake them cakes and feed them until they break apart, wherein new beings are found in their old shells. There was so much going on in such a short story: an intense, forbidden female gluttony, excess vs. bodily control, generations looking after each other, a coming into personhood and identity, and a stunning spookiness about the whole thing that reminded me of a Hayao Miyazaki film.

I have a few major critiques of the anthology. First, to my knowledge, all the authors are women, which might be common for feminist anthologies, but it gives one the impression only women care about feminism or feminist literature, which certainly isn't the case. Additionally, most of the authors are white, which seems like a missed opportunity since many of the best speculative fiction writers now are people of color. Lastly, although many of the stories were clever and unique, I expected more creativity from a speculative fiction collection.

This is the same kind of exasperation I have with every alien movie or book that portrays aliens as human-like in their features. Why?? The possibilities are seriously endless—so why were so many of the stories about women who think they are plants and women who think they are planets? Why not use this as a space to completely reimagine gender roles, to explore new concepts, to queer the way we even think of short stories?

All in all, I think *Sisters of the Revolution* is an important and necessary collection that highlights some remarkable works, both old and new. I'm glad it has opened up this door and I would just like to see future collections be more adventurous.

—Arielle Burgdorf



Dispatches Against Displacement
James Tracy
AK Press
$15.95 | 150 pages

When I moved to San Francisco for the first time in the early 1990s, James Tracy was the cool punk guy working at the hip alternative job, living in the Mission, probably in some cool band; I don't remember—all the things I wanted to be. By the time I moved back a number of years later and became that person, James had moved on to something even more impressive—doing badass activism to change people's lives and make the world better. I eventually caught up on that front too, but now James has moved on even further to do things I doubt I'll find myself doing in a few years, like founding and running one of the organizations that's doing the most to keep poor people in this city; but more on that later.

On top of all that, James Tracy has now written this book about housing activism. If you live in the Bay Area, you should read this book because you know this is the only thing anyone can ever talk about anyway so you may as well be well informed. If you live somewhere else, you should probably read it too. Because while we here in SF have stepped up to surpass NYC as ground zero for this kind of urban disaster in the US, it's happening all over the world. London, Berlin, Shanghai, Buenos Aires, Nairobi, Chattanooga, Denver—you name it. The factors that are causing this worldwide shift are outside the scope of this little book review, but the result is that displacement in/from cities is one of the biggest human rights issues of our time.

Punks don't enjoy being pushed out of the neighborhoods we like, where we can cluster with our friends, but as predominantly young transient people, it isn't the end of the world—people move and move on. But for many, losing their homes is devastating. For families, it can mean losing access to generations of family members and school continuity; for disabled people, it can mean being forced into a nursing home; for seniors or the ill, it can (and frequently does) mean death; for anyone who has put down deep roots or never lived anywhere else, the loss of community can be disastrous in practical as well as emotional ways; and for the cities themselves, it means a loss of the culture, vibrancy, and diversity that differentiates a city from a collection of barracks.

Dispatches Against Displacement touches on all this and more without getting bogged down in urban planning jargon or minutiae. James looks back at his history of housing related activism in the Bay Area, the history of displacement in the US and the politics of gentrification, and forward to what we can do to change things. The first chapters cover various activist moments and movements in SF, mostly around the time of what we here call the First DotCom Boom—a period in which Silicon Valley became the biggest deal in the world and 17,000–40,000 units were evicted in a city of less than a million, probably 50% of those in a single small neighborhood. As the book goes on chronologically, the activist community in SF, and the book itself, begins to struggle with the conflict between the need to engage with municipal planning entities and the limitations of politicking and advocacy work and need to operate outside of the political system. And ultimately, this question is the focus of the final chapters and visioning.

James is the co-founder of the San Francisco Land Trust, so it isn't surprising that he focuses heavily on the land trust model as a way to get out of the trap of capitalist home and land stewardship, and he makes a very convincing case that lines up with what I have seen myself over the last few years in this town—that if we can't tear down the system (spoiler: probably not happening in the next couple of years), the SFLT appears to be one of the only things that can save this city. What does surprise me is the fact that he doesn't mention his personal involvement in a land trust anywhere in the text of the book, which strikes me as a pretty serious oversight. Like every book I've read from this area on the subject of displacement, this one has a feeling of great urgency and haste; unlike the rest, this is not reflected in the coherence of the ideas presented, but there are a few jarring little things. I think the disclosure slip is a pretty big one, but mostly it's just typos (lots) and references to "upcoming" ballot measures (spoiler: we lost), none of which take away from the heart of the book in any material way, but taken together do make it feel a bit less like a book and more like a zine or an article.

In any case, the book takes us through some of the history of housing advocacy locally, the resistance of the present (land trusts and confrontational activist groups), and into James' proposal for a better future. His ideas are strongly rooted in the history of this struggle and are well thought out and serious; he is enormously knowledgeable about this subject and is well qualified to talk about what might work better than what is currently being done. I was especially moved, emotionally and intellectually, by the (obvious in retrospect) idea of reparations to Black communities in the form of land/homes. To quote, "This book is about [the] possibility of taking prefigurative politics to scale, test piloting new forms of urban life without derailing the larger project of transformative politics." Sounds pretty good to me. So please read this book so that at the next show, the endless small talk about evictions and housing insecurity and stupid bistros can go somewhere deeper and more interesting. See ya in da pit...and I'll be looking for a detailed and cogent analysis of what we should do next to save our scenes and cities.

—Anandi Wonder

MOVIES

BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

UNKNOWN WRECKS

I am sure it doesn't happen anymore, but my favorite story in **Revenge of the Mekons** is when Mark "Chalkie" White, the original singer of the Mekons, recalls the first time the band gets played on John Peel's radio show. Peel announces he will be playing the Mekons, so Chalkie runs down to the pub with his radio so the band can stand around listening to themselves. It is that kind of subtle enthusiasm that permeates this band documentary. I am not a fan of the band, but I am fan of their attitude. More so after seeing how and why they keep going. If only every band had this attitude, the state of music would be much cooler.

The Mekons started in Leeds, UK, while the members were studying art at the University of Leeds. They hung out with members of Gang Of Four, who were in the process of forming their band. When Gang Of Four went to the pub, the future Mekons picked up the abandoned instruments and started to play. Even though Gang Of Four was the "proper band," as Jon Langford recalls, the Mekons got a slot opening for the Rezillos. At the show, Fast Records' Bob Last saw the band and offered to make a record. The record, *Never Been In A Riot*, was a response to the Clash's "White Riot" and the song the band heard on the BBC outside the pub.

Since the Mekons have been around since 1977, **Revenge of the Mekons** has a lot to work with. The documentary manages to cover it all without dwelling on any one aspect too much. The pace moves briskly. The band gives up performing in the early '80s due to too much violence occurring at their shows. They regroup to play a benefit for the 1984 UK miners' strike, even adding "real" musicians to the mix, including former Rolling Stone and Pretty Thing Dick Taylor. The Mekons begin adding American country influences to their music. They sign to a major label. They get dropped. They return to art. All the while, the Mekons continued recording music and touring.

Revenge of the Mekons didn't convince me to go out and buy any Mekons records. That is the one negative of the film. A band documentary should make you want to listen to the band's music. However, I have a newfound respect for the band. They seem to have figured out the secret of staying together without getting on each other's nerves too much. It may be that they have retained their cult status so everyone's egos stay grounded. They manage to keep doing it their way, so that's a cool thing. (mekonsmovie.com)

Brontez Purnell's **100 Boyfriends Mixtape** is a short film examining relationships of some young gay men. It appears to be autobiographical. Whenever I watch a really personal film, I always wonder what the filmmaker is trying to tell me. I am not sure in this case. It's either that it is OK to cheat or that you should really be honest. That seems rather contradictory. Perhaps that is the idea.

DeShawn (Purnell) described himself as "a good boy who needed to be rescued" when he first met his boyfriend, Andres. However, now DeShawn is cheating on him with Pablo. He feels guilty. He is confused. He's making excuses. Between bouts of sex, he discusses his situation with his friend. There is a lot of talking and a lot of sex. What should he do?

I don't necessarily consider myself a prude, but I think this is the first time I have seen male/male sex in a film. In 2016 that seems illogical. I'll chalk it up to a new experience as well as an interesting peek at someone else's sex life. (filmfreeway.com/project/474031)

I am convinced I will watch anything with Bill Murray in it. My friend Mary cannot believe I enjoyed some of **A Very Murray Christmas.** I guess I am easily entertained. I probably shouldn't admit that I also watched **Rock the Kasbah**. First of all, it's called **Rock the Kasbah.**

Rock the Kasbah has Murray as washed up music promoter Richie Lanz. He is working out of a Los Angeles motel. We first see him ripping off an untalented singer. Then his one client, Ronnie, gets an offer to play a tour of Afghanistan entertaining the US troops. He convinces her to do it for the money, of course. She complains the whole trip there, finally taking off before the first show with all his money and his passport. Ronnie may behave like a brat the whole time, but I can't believe she would take off with Lanz's passport. It's disingenuous, but that is how everything is set in motion.

Murray is charming, but **Rock the Kasbah** seems like an excuse to point out how rough and different life is in Afghanistan. Everyone is up to something and of course there is the religious repression. Then there is *Afghan Star*, a television singing competition just like *American Idol*. So maybe things aren't so different after all. Lanz discovers a woman, Salima, singing in a cave and uses his charm to persuade her to compete on the show. **Rock the Kasbah** is filled with so many stereotypes. I will also mention that it was written by Mitch Glazer, who also wrote A Very Murray Christmas. Viewer beware.

Rock the Kasbah is dedicated to Setara Hussainzada, who I had to look up in order to find out that she was the first woman to sing on *Afghan Star*. She also was insulted and received death threats because of her appearance. This film is a terrible tribute to her. (rockthekasbahmovie.com)

I am always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to Carolyn Keddy, Maximum Rocknroll, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area, let me know at carolyn@maximumrocknroll.com. I will go see it. carolynkeddy.com

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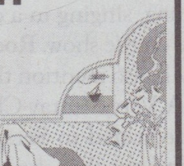

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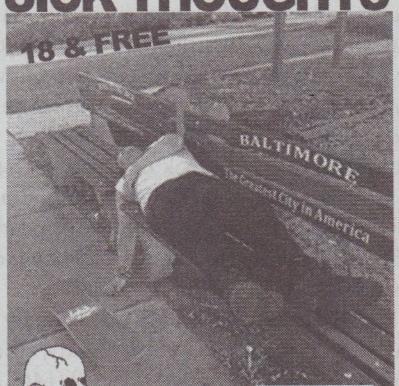

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ADVLTS – "Black Bile" EP

I love a good six-song EP. There's no space to waste. Each song gets to the point with direct, biting punk that soars in the realm of DEFECT DEFECT, GANG OF FOUR (in guitar tone and urgency), or even the MINUTEMEN is some spots. The recording sounds beautifully blown-out in a way that reminds me of that first MARKED MEN LP on Rip Off. An instantly classic sounding record that still seems fresh. Hooks for days. (GH)
(Toxic Pop)

ALICJA-POP – "Rats: Home Recordings 2009–2013" LP

Bedroom pop genius from Memphis' own ALICJA TROUT, all recorded solo style with her playing everything. A few songs have an early FASTBACKS appeal, there are some icy pop endeavors, a couple power pop numbers, even a song from the record she made of children's songs. Something for everybody! This record doesn't feel all over the place, though: it feels like someone whose ideas can't be contained, who probably has a killer record collection and a need to keep moving forward. Her pared down pop sensibility prevails—this is not self-indulgent, it's charming and dark in equal measure. Her lyrics are really cool, moving between super sincere love songs to totally bleak sci-fi futurisms. "Calm World" is such a great song, has a LOST SOUNDS feel even, definitely mixtape worthy. (LG)
(Certified PR)

ANARQUIA VERTICAL – "Guerra Higiénica" EP

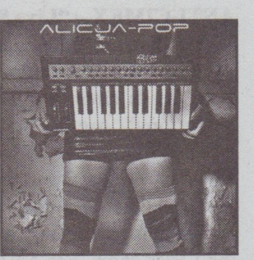
Barcelona hardcore 2015! Nine salvos of stripped-down hardcore punk, none of which reach the one-minute mark. Structure and speed-wise the songwriting recalls the early DRI material, while the riffs combine the drive of SSD with melodic touches from the 7 SECONDS playbook. The lyrics/politics are right on, and firmly mark ANARQUIA VERTICAL as a band born of contemporary Spain, no matter how retro their sound might be. The odd graphic design, which looks more like a rough mock-up of a sleeve than the finished product, might be a turn-off to some, but the record enclosed is well worth your time. (AU)
(Antitodo)

ANGRY ANGLES – LP

When this was announced, I was unable to keep my cool—would the previously assumed lost LP tracks finally emerge!? Unfortunately not! But still, ANGRY ANGLES were one of the best groups of the early '00s and this comp is a devastating delivery of that fact. They put out a series of perfect 45s that encapsulated the off-kilter pop values and punk delivery of the URINALS, the ADVERTS, and WIRE with a sneering layer of Memphis garage. Most of the time when people reference the aforementioned groups in reference to modern sounds, it's merely a lazy shorthand descriptor that isn't really based on reality, but ANGRY ANGLES really do evoke these ideals! The snarled shards of guitar, the way Jay and Alix's voices crash into each other, the nervous frantic rhythm and paranoid lyrical visions! Strange pop evocations smashed in with sharp jolting attacks on your meager square sensibilities! Their version of DEVO's "Blockhead" is maybe better than the original?! "You Fell In" sounds like a lost URINALS song, otherworldly creep-pop genius. My maniac mind is unable to put into the words the power and importance of these sounds even after spinning this record relentlessly for hours. The OBLIVIANS cover! The alternative version of "Things Are Moving!" Sort of makes me wish some science genius could fix the lost disk drive or whatever it was that resulted in the lack of an ANGRY ANGLES LP…According to Alix's liner notes, the unreleased songs on this are from an aborted recording session in Montreal which Jay rejected because he was only satisfied with recordings he did himself and you can kind of see why he felt that way. His recordings are somehow more vicious and visionary! But the songs are fucking great of course. "Set in Stone" is an epic, almost as desperate as "Youth of America!" A low level potboiler that you can't put down until you realize that you are the low level! A few unreleased ANGRY ANGLES songs ended up on later JAY REATARD solo records and you can hear their versions of "Blood Visions" and "All the Same" on this ("Blood Visions" is on a downloaded live set that comes with this LP) and you can see how this band set him up for that new punk vision. What I would give to hear the ANGRY ANGLES version of *Blood Visions!* (LG)
(Goner)

ANGRY BRIGADE / ZEMEZLUC – split EP

Ready for your double dose of veteran Czech hardcore punk this month? Prague's ANGRY BRIGADE kicks things off with a bomb-blast and dramatic intro that eventually materializes into charging crust. Then they cover "I Believe in Miracles," featuring a guest vocalist, with crust-ified music but melodic vocals. Good for a hoot, but don't think I ever need to hear that again! Brno's ZEMEZLUC is likely the longest-running punk band from Czech Republic, as this is their 30th year of upping the punx! For the uninitiated, they do upbeat and driving punk with catchy gang vocals and gui-



ANTI-CIMEX
LIVE 85/86

CANCEROUS GROWTH
hmmlmmlum...

tar lines, and a bit of street punk and hardcore to round out their sound. Comes with two double-sided fold over sleeves with lyrics (ZEMEZLUC's translated to English) and plenty of "Goodnight White Pride" banners. (MA)
(Emergency / Insane Society / Vegan Food)

AN INVITATION – "Fuck the Police" EP
Herein a blast of fetid air, four tracks that absolutely do not relent in a late '90s punk attack with a hugely welcome dose of LAUGHING HYENAS in both the vox and the production. It's like sludge played really, really fast, which is the best kind of punk because that means it's basically '70s metal played at coke-overdose speeds. This is a total winner and they should get an LP out right goddamn now—they are ready! (RW)
(Trash King Productions)

ANTI-CIMEX – "Live 85/86" LP
Two live sets of less than mediocre sound quality: one from Stockholm circa '85 and the other from Leeds circa '86. Do we really need this to be on vinyl? Are the pressing plants not clogged up enough already by Record Store Day? I think a nice tape release would have sufficed. Insert has fliers, photos, a couple anecdotes from Charlie, and what is presumably an old zine clipping about the Leeds show. For ANTI-CIMEX maniac completists only. (MA)
(Bastard Squad / Godzilla / Punk Vortex)

ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT – "Terrorize" LP
Welcome to Record Store Day 2016™®©, where you can go wait in a long line (or maybe skip the line by hitting up Urban Outfitters or something) to buy ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT's new boring album. It's pretty much a big long flat line of compressed rock instruments, flawless drum-gallop, and angry-man hollers. I know, I'm being an insufferable smart ass. I also know these guys are totally into what they're doing and I've actually got no problem with that. It's just so clean and sterile sounding, and nothing about the songwriting stands out, so it gets a bad review. Regardless what I think, I'm sure they'll keep the Gilman brats circle pitting. (MA)
(Beer City)

BACKSLIDER – "2008–2013" CD
This band is fucking bad as fuck. Here we have most of their recordings all in one place—very sick! BACKSLIDER is a (formerly) two-piece, guitar and drums, sludgy, grind mind fuck. They kind of sound like a couple of powerviolence freaks that are really into BRAINOIL, SLEEP, and unbridled mayhem. This is the kind of shit that keeps my hardcore dream alive. Fuck metal, have you dudes heard BACKSLIDER? Early stuff has a heavy INFEST influence, and the more recent stuff is just crushing. Fifty-one songs in forty-one minutes—that's what I'm talking about. (BA)
(To Live a Lie)

LA BELLA – "Ides" 12"
This is a short 12" of screaming emotional hardcore. It sounds very much like the year 2002, like something on Level Plane, like LIGHT THE FUSE AND RUN, but without the nod to early '90s emo hardcore that many of those bands had. Punk music rarely breaks molds, and while this is no exception, it is done pretty well. The one element that really makes this stand out is the band's greater reliance on the bass for the noodling parts (while still retaining a heaviness) with the guitar sticking more to chords. The nice looking lyric booklet is also much appreciated. (PA)
(Sombras del Progreso)

BIKES – LP
This is the second album by these Berlin rockers. They do the garage rock moderne thing right. The tunes are jangly and rollickin'. The sound is rudimentary with an edge. The singer has a bit of an attitude. Plus it's very catchy. Nice stuff. (CK)
(Alien Snatch!)

BLACK DONNELLYS – "Orchestrate A Disaster" CD
What's a Black Donnelly? This is a combination of the OFFSPRING and EMERSON, LAKE & PALMER. Skater Prog. Most of it's pretty weak, but "The Great White Way" is decent. Fuck a duck. (RO) (label?)

BLIND DEAD – "Blinded" EP
This is the band those friends of yours that you worry about are in. BLIND DEAD offers up some muddy as fuck hardcore with the bass deep in the red zone. Everything about this is blown-out, including the singer's throat. This is some real grimy shit. Oozing like industrial waste into your favorite swimming hole. Now, I'm into all of that, but it's the brief yet shredding thrash guitar solos that make this one a real winner. It's like you're buried alive and you're starting to get a little tired of it. Then, all of the sudden, a massive chainsaw appears out of nowhere and cuts you in half, and you're like, "Fucking sick!" (BA)
(Impostor Complex)

THE BRASS – "Desperation" EP
One for Turbo & Gang. Four tracks of brash New York City skinhead rock with melodic, catchy choruses and boot-to-the-head vocals. Something here for everyone. I also like it when an Oi! band nails their colors to the mast and makes a clear statement on where they stand against hate and fascism. Two thumbs up for the BRASS. (AM)
(Sydney Town)

BROCCOLI JELLY – "Sleepy Dogs" CD
This trio from GERMANY sounds just like early GREEN DAY. The vocals, the music, the riffing, etc…They are good at it, and they do have some chops. Not much mystery here—you have been warned / informed. (RL)
(self-released)

CANCEROUS GROWTH – "Hmmlmmlum…" LP
A rather odd amalgam of thrashin' hardcore and some more melodic tendencies bordering on HÜSKER DÜ and MEAT PUPPETS-style alternativity, Boston's CANCEROUS GROWTH released this, their second and final full-length, back in 1987. This record is an amazing document of how relatively limitless punk once was: if someone sung in the style of "Some Things Here" at a hardcore show today, they'd be laughed off stage more often than not. And yet it fucking works! OK, so the killer-to-filler ratio here is nothing to brag about, but there are some catchy songs and oh-so-sick leads to be found throughout, most notably when the band stretches out on the epic "One Side." The second half is limited by relatively lazy songwriting and an overabundance of 1-2-1-2 thocka-thocka drumming that was crossing over so, so hard at the time, but I did appreciate the time that they took to throw in a gnarly psychedelic freakout. (WB)
(Beer City)

CHAOS UK – "Shit Man Fucker!" EP
Call it CHAOS UK if you must, since there are a couple of the same guys in this band, but this is bog standard metallic bar punk. If you're looking for traces of the band that wrote classics like "Four Minute Warning" or "No Security," you won't find them here. The vocals still carry a hint of the old venom, but that's the only quality that carries over from the good material. (AU)
(540)

CLEVER – "Kewdi Udi" LP
I know so many people are bonkers for "all things '90s," but I would've never thought that in 2016 I'd end up hearing bands that remind me of the COWS (and more than one of 'em, at that). Though they're Australian, this has all the trademarks of that "Midwestern weirdo" sound—lots of rumbly bass, sneaky yet paranoid vocals, and yep, that familiar yet often great stop/start JESUS LIZARD-thing. In all, really solid stuff, and I would definitely love to hear more. (JD)
(Homeless)

COKSKAR – "Sooner Than Your Think" EP
Noisy and incoherent guitar/drum grind with mind bending, shake your head riffs and vocals delivered with an unrivaled and unhinged intensity. For those of you who insist that "noise not music" just means thunderous D-beat with fuzzed out guitars, I would like for you to meet this Minneapolis trio, because they sound like a train derailing right into your ear holes. If you like your listening to be a challenge, then you've found your match. Superbly packaged in a weird mini pocket sleeve with info screened on an oversized hi-gloss silver vinyl thing…COKSKAR is as difficult to hold and understand as they are to listen to. The title track alone is well worth the price of admission, but this is *not* for everyone. (WN)
(self-released)

COUNTER INTUITS – "Monosyllabilly" LP
Sophomore outing from this genius Ohio outfit. For those unfamiliar, this is the brainchild from Jared of TIMES NEW VIKING and Ron House of countless greats, namely GREAT PLAINS and THOMAS JEFFERSON SLAVE APARTMENTS.

It's a meeting of the minds that's sure to stimulate and eventually ruin yours. The majority of the LP is the duo working it out on their own, employing that fabled prim-styled homespun weirdo rock that seems unique to the locale...which I'm a full-blown sucker for. The full band recordings, heard here first, are unreal and have me drooling, particularly "Sunglasses After Death," the surefire best tune of 2016. House's raving is top-tier and his laser focus deflates every target he aims toward. Collectively, the album is punk out of time, pop by accident, and smart on a vaguely intimidating and overtly humorous level. DIY rock'n'roll does not get better than this. Required listening. (MC)
(Pyramid Scheme)

CRAZY SPIRIT – "Whisper" EP

These guys have been around long enough to be classic rock. As more of a BOSTON than a SUPERTRAMP, a FOGHAT than a FOREIGNER, they almost singlehandedly put a not at all dead NYC scene back on the international map some years back. Here we get the first new vinyl from them in a long while. Well, does it suck, you say, like AEROSMITH sans heroin? Not at all. This record is the perfect mix of their earliest nihilistic thrash and the psychedelic razor goo of later releases. The vocals bite, the guitar shreds, and the primitive rhythm section gallops along in a padded cell hoedown of pain. I've followed this band through many personal life changes and I can honestly say they stand the test of time. If all is right with this fucked-up world, we will be listening to CRAZY SPIRIT on Mars. (RO)
(No Patience / Toxic State)

THE CRUNKY KIDS – "In the Face of the Death of Death" EP

Crazy titled 7" from Cleveland hardcore loons. I've known their name forever via the *real* rock'n'wrestling connection of Tony Erba and CRUNKY KIDS' associated bands (H100s, BOMBBUILDER, etc.). This group has two of BOMBBUILDER's members: drummer Wedge and Mr. (Thuggy) Bearbomb. This is five tracks of heavy, confrontational hardcore but, it's *not* anything like INTEGRITY or RINGWORM (thankfully). Even their mid-paced tune "Not Dead" and the dirge-y "Endless Warning" are solid. (JD)
(Distort Everything / Hibachi / My Mind's Eye)

THE CRUSTIES – "Crustunes" LP

Long before anyone knew anything about "crust punk," there was Milwaukee's CRUSTIES. These recordings are from 1985 and this comes off pretty good and serviceable '80s hardcore. It's got some good riffs n' all, yet nothing really stand out to me. OK, the playing on "Don't You Think" is quite good, but it just doesn't have that certain "oomph" to put it over to the top to me. Must be another band that you have to file under "you had to be there." (JD)
(Beer City)

THE CRYBABYS / LESTER GREENOWSKI – split EP

God, I fucking hate tattoo pinup artwork on records. There was a time and a place when that stuff meant fun trashy toothless folks were involved. Not here. I also hate Eastern European alt country masquerading as punk, like the CRYBABYS who present one original and a vomit inducing cover most closely comparable to the SUPERSUCKERS country stuff here. You won't be dropping LESTER GREENOWSKI's name anytime soon. Side-B features some of the hokiest pop punk crap I've ever heard. It's most closely comparable to... crap. Fuck me. I wipe my ass with Bettie Page. (RO)
(Area Pirata)

DARK BLUE – "Vicious Romance/Delco Runts"

Two tracks of perfectly concocted noise pop. DARK BLUE remind me of GUIDED BY VOICES, which is a ridiculous thing to say as GUIDED BY VOICES have a million different sounds. I suppose what I mean is that they remind me of what I like about GUIDED BY VOICES. Layers of distortion and feedback can't disguise the underlying pop sensibility. Both songs are delivered with heart-wrenching sincerity and are dripping with dead-end angst. Great stuff. (AM)
(12XU)

DEATH CHURCH – "Black Book" flexi

Oh, shit…A+ for naming your band after my favorite album. Extremely artful reverberated death rock from Australia, in the style of VEX, CEMETARY, PART 1, or MORAL SUCKLING. The vocalist cracks and howls with frustrated contempt as if the band were more designed as EXIT-STANCE, DISRUPT, or E.N.T. This is a raw and aggressive affect that much of the music in this genre lacks. Nauseous barfing effects within the writhing echoing disdain of the guitars are a new and nice touch. Plodding and macabre, they move from Jekyll to Hyde within each song. Glad to have this in my small collection of flexis. Two tracks: "Betrayal" and "Inside Struggle," includes a well-crafted booklet of hundreds of collaged images. #188/250—dig it up. (JR)
(self-released)

DIRTY PROTEST / RAID – split LP

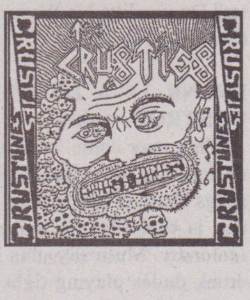
A split record with a band from Eindhoven, Netherlands, and one from Boise, Idaho...And both bands are ex-SEPTIC DEATH??? Well, that was a long time ago. Here in the present, Eindhoven's DIRTY PROTEST have mostly quick songs and a basic hardcore style. Their side sounds like it was recorded live in the studio, which adds to the energy. The have a female vocalist and lyrics in English. Overall, the songs range from OK to pretty good, with some intense moments here and there. They're best at raging instrumental bridges, like the dual guitars at the end of "Syringe Benefits." The lyrics cover nationalist political parties (which they're against—some clever disses here), the fake participation pushed online, and better living through credit card fraud. Boise's RAID have a similar sound, though with male vocals and a tighter, faster approach. They don't hit the heights their comrades do, and their side doesn't call for repeated plays. "Paulie Unsaturated" is the best punk name I've heard in a while, though. DIRTY PROTEST is worth a look, but I don't think this LP will be in high demand as the years go on. (JM)
(Alley / Bilharzoise / Chance Alliance / Headbones Merch)

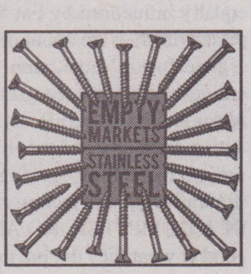
DIVERS – "Achin' On/Can't Do That"

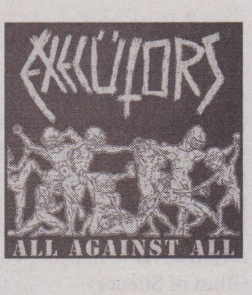
One slow burner of a DEAD MOON cover that gets the spirit of Mr. Cole with a bit of that old aching sincerity and an original that is loud and on-target indie rock in the primal Oz "tradition" of the last couple of years. Decent little rager. (RW)
(Dirt Cult)

DNA – "You & You/Little Ants"

DNA is the failed attempt (or maybe success) at subverting the building of rock'n'roll into a rubble of torn apart guitars, tumbled drums, and pounded keys. They ended up with something that is completely uncomfortable but still manages to be danceable (at points). These two songs span through sputtering, lurching, sickly, and a voice-like yelling at the clouds. There is no beauty or elegance in this, no warmth or softness. It's a cold blank room or a crowded train car. A deep belief of paranoia. What does it mean that this still sounds new and dangerous a solid 35-plus years later? Does it mat-







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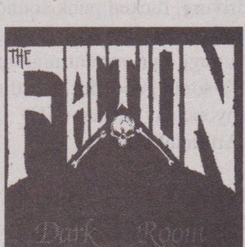


ter? Do you like No Wave? (MM)
(Superior Viaduct)

DRUNK IN A DUMPSTER / NO ANGER CONTROL – split LP

This may come as a surprise to some of our readers, but DRUNK IN A DUMPSTER has a few songs about drinking beer. They also have a song that is basically the plot synopsis of the movie *Idiocracy*. Musically, this band consists of some drunk dudes playing tight and tuneful bar punk, equally influenced by Fat Wreck Chords and how pissed off they are about the barriers to just havin' a good fuckin' time, *man*. Most of the lyrics are cringe-worthy, but the guitar solos are downright *blazing*. NO ANGER CONTROL follows suit with more angry and tuneful bar punk songs about vanity, hypocrites, getting stabbed in the back (figuratively), and feeling crazy. Just like DRUNK IN A DUMPSTER, NO ANGER CONTROL are good at what they do, but this record sails by without leaving a mark on me. (GH)
(No Profit)

JONI EKMAN – LP

JONI EKMAN is the guitarist/singer in the ACHTUNGS. As much as I like the ACHTUNGS (and I do!), I am glad to see EKMAN's solo record is not just a rehash. He goes a bit pop, kind of psychedelic, and throws in some glam. I like his falsetto vocals. The tunes are breezy and the Finnish words and accent give them an extra kick. The record cover is fun, too. This is very cool. (CK)
(Blast of Silence)

ELECTRO INSIDES – "Bad Birthday" EP

The cover of this record makes this band look like they're a horror punk / goth group who laid out their art on an outdated '90s version of MS Paint…not in, like, a "cool" way. The band is *not* a horror punk band, thankfully. They play muddy, grungy, and sometimes plodding hardcore punk with guttural, lurching, pissed vocals. They delve into some dark punk shit (read: ARCTIC FLOWERS / the NEW FLESH) here and there, especially on the closer, "Y. Pestis," but they mostly stick to a driving, fucked punk sound. The lyrics delve into topics like cis-male privilege and having to trudge through our current nightmare reality of a world. It's some good shit, but that artwork is not doing anyone any favors. (GH)
(Artificial Limbs)

E-METERS – "King of the Waves/Diamond Beaches"

The influences on this shine through bright and distinct from each other on each song. The first side is a love letter to the thick fuzz and bass dynamics of early DINOSAUR JR. as well as the songwriting of ARCHERS OF LOAF circa *Vee Vee*. The B-Side casts the net way wider, picking up some vocals with a Perry Farrell vibe and just a touch of WEEZER in some of the leaden playing. While these songs are good, they're a good *first effort*, with all of their constituent parts not fully aligned. These guys even make a few interesting choices in the writing of these parts and how they go together. Having heard this, I eagerly await listening to their next release. Luckily, this is the future, and they have an even newer record, so I can right now. (LP)
(self-released)

E-METERS – "Lost Boy" EP

These oddballs graced us with (count 'em) two 7"s this month. And this EP bites into a subdued and straight-laced indie rock vibe (even more so than the previous one). Imagine if the folks from MILK MUSIC had absolutely no interest in punk at all. There are some guitar riffs that could act as the theoretical gasoline for this band, but their sulking mid-paced rock music never materializes much energy. The lit match never appears. If you're a loner with an unhealthy appetite for '90s alt rock, I would recommend checking these guys out. But start with the "King of the Waves" EP first. (FS)
(self-released)

EMPTY MARKETS – "Stainless Steel" LP

The first thing I noticed about this record is that the songs are downright *propulsive*—I found it hard to just sit here in my room while this record spun on my turntable. I wanted to be out in the streets, running around. That's a good sign. Sonically, my initial thought was that EMPTY MARKETS sounds a little like a mash-up of *Blood Visions*-era JAY REATARD and Greg Sage's guitar work, as far as atmosphere and experimentation is concerned. Although it starts out direct and driving, the band quickly detours into areas of spacey guitar freak-outs and some minimal synth flourishes while never sparing any of their energy. Throughout the twelve songs, the band keeps everything sounding fresh and dynamic in a way that is so hard to accomplish on an LP. Excellent record. The band features members of CRUDDY and HEX DISPENSERS, for those of you who keep track of these things. (GH)
(12XU)

ERRADICT! / SUSS LAW – split flexi

Maximum speed tupa-tupa with walls of noise punk guitars and thunderous vocals from SUSS LAW, maximum energy raw hardcore with whirlwind guitars (note: these are different from walls of noise punk guitar—faster picking) and blown-out vocals from ERRADICT! Lyrics from both bands are dripping with beer and hate, both belt out filthy punk through a CHAOS UK / DISORDER filter, but if they are aping anything at all (and I'm not saying they are), then it's a presentation and an aesthetic more than a style. The filthy ear destruction hordes will rightfully eat this shit up. (WN)
(Doomed To Extinction)

ESPERANZA – "Choice" EP

This ESPERANZA is ex-PERSEVERE from Hiroshima, Japan. They bring gnarled vocals, some guitar leads, and a simple but active bass to their ugly, bouncy, catchy hardcore. The singer sings, despite sounding like he's retching out the words, while the other guys carry a tune on their big woah-ohs. The opener, "Cruel Flake," rules, but the rest of the EP is uneven. "Sad Society" has a nice interplay between the guitar and bass, while "Zero" is overlong. Sometimes the guitar gets buried under the chorus. The lyrics are in English, with Japanese translations. The one great song is good enough for me to recommend this. (JM)
(Kämäset Levyt)

EXECUTORS – "All Against All" LP

These guys play some pretty damn good speedy melodic Oi!-soaked punk with metal licks. I'll pull a Bruce and quote lyrics: "*Give us guns. We'll kill children. It's our right. It's in the constitution. Give us guns. It's our right to bear arms. We'll show no mercy. Kill everyone—even dogs*" and "*The cops can't believe it. How much their wives need it. The cops can't believe it. She married a demon.*" Genius. The singer's got a good gravely pint-of-razors skinhead voice and musically they're a combo of the NIGHT BIRDS, BLITZ, and ANGELIC UPSTARTS. Makes for a damn listenable record and night out at the pub. Skol. (RO)
(Dead Beat)

THE FACTION – "Corpse in Disguise" LP

The FACTION are a perfect band for fourteen-year-olds—they sing about skateboarding, have a skull as their logo, are called "the FACTION," and name their records stuff like *Corpse in Disguise*. The "seminal skate-rock band" from San Jose (this is like being the pointiest toothpick in a case of toothpicks someone locked in a cupboard in the basement of a house that later burned down and was paved over) put this record out in 1984. Beer City, a record label I own, put out this reissue in 2016. Who says there's not a fertile market in the United States right now??? (BB)
(Beer City)

THE FACTION – "Dark Room" LP

I started collecting heavily in the '90s and it was always funny to me how the FACTION fit into it all. Back then, serious punks basically dismissed them as child punk, a guilty pleasure at best. Steve Caballero on guitar and the *Thrasher Skate Rock* connection garnered most of their true fans...nostalgic skaters. At some point in the mid-'00s, that rote '80s OC beach punk sound resurfaced as a full-on lifestyle, with that weird beach bro accent of over-enunciated vocals no longer inducing cringes but instead garnering high-fives and macho moves at shows. And people started paying money for Mystic Records. It's a minor mystery that the FACTION has taken this long to get the rehash treatment. In hindsight, the first two 7" EPs were actually pretty solid. As far as I'm concerned, by the time they got around to doing 12"s they were just filling the grooves with formula. *Dark Room* hits that mildly goth sweet spot if you're sick of just listening to TSOL, but this doesn't approach guilty pleasure levels for me. Red wax and printed inner, for those who care. (GB)
(Beer City)

THE FACTION – "Epitaph" LP

After reviewing some piss poor reunion albums by this band, we finally get the real deal: reissues of the band in their prime back in the '80s. They

were the stars of the Bay Area skate rock scene due to skatemaster Steve Cabillero on rhythm axe. This starts out with the hit "I Decide For Me," and every song's pretty decent, even the hokey GENERATION X cover and surf instrumental. The San Jose bands always sounded more similar to Orange County bands with their hooks and melodies, and the FACTION are kings of that sound for sure, but I'd always take the DRUNK INJUNS / LOS OLVIDADOS crew over these guys. Still, if you want to take a trip back to the days of shitty wheels and giant boards and endless hassling from the pigs, look no further. (RO)
(Beer City)

THE FACTION – "No Hidden Messages" LP

Who can resist songs about hating the '60s and why we should eat fast food and stop saving the whales? This is classic skate rock for discontented suburban teens on a rampage. Snotty California accents, HC guitars, inside jokes, a total brat attack—music by teenagers for teenagers? Perfect for getting sunburned to at your local skate ditch, for re-reading old issues of *Thrasher*, and starting your own zine / generic hardcore band. You know, the sound of hanging out at the curb by the local 7-Eleven and losing your mind with boredom. The lyrics are dumb and funny, the music is catchy and goofy, the sound of California in 1983. Skate for fun or not at all, etc. (LG)
(Beer City)

THE FACTION – "Yesterday is Gone" 12"

For the first time we have a 12" repress treatment of the FACTION's first 7" from 1983. I'm trying to ask myself what actually makes anything skate rock and not just punk rock, but if I try to philosophize too much I'm probably working ten times harder than these guys did to invent the genre. I guess it's that simple motivation of wanting your record cover to have your band name written in blood on a brick wall over a skeleton on a skateboard just because it would be sick. The record is less metallic than their later ones, simple and fun US hardcore that helped embody a time for skate culture when everyone involved in professional skateboarding was still young enough to live with their parents in SoCal suburbia, boards were shaped like fish instead of popsicle sticks, and things hadn't gotten quite so mainstream corporate. Don't over think it—jam some punk at the skate sesh behind the grocery store and drink some Cokes. (BW)
(Beer City)

THE FALCON – "Gather Up The Chaps" CD

Since I posited previously in these pages and elsewhere, the FALCON's debut long player was most likely the greatest record of the 21st century (to date), well, that's a pretty tough act to follow. It was with understandable trepidation that I approached this new effort. Of course, given the genius of BRENDAN KELLY (also a third of the LAWRENCE ARMS and knowing the vast majority of his various solo outings), I shouldn't have worried. It *is* difficult to continue to walk in such oversized shoes, but this manages to gracefully bound along such a tightrope with nary a sideways glance. For those of you who still have no real idea what I'm talking about, think about how PROPAGANDHI, on their first couple of albums, completely redefined that NOFX pop punk sound/style (and for that matter, how NOFX took BAD RELIGION's *Suffer* and completely redefined melodic hardcore). Well, the FALCON have basically given the same treatment to JAWBREAKER (particularly JAWBREAKER's seminal first and third records). *Gather Up The Chaps* adds in even more lead guitar flourishes and layered (yet suitably raspy) vocals. And rocks the fucking house down. Not as immediately accessible as their debut, and all the better for it. (RK)
(Red Scare)

THE FALL – "Bingo Master's Break Out!" EP

How does one go about reviewing the reissue of an all-time favorite record? This is one of the best singles ever released during the initial open-minded waves of punk rock, the blueprint for all future FALL, the sound that inspired a thousand inferior copycats. The title track was the first FALL song I heard and to me, it's perfect. I can't objectively review it. It would be like reviewing my mum. In fact, I think it would be easier to review my mum. Basically, you need this, and it sounds fantastic on this quality pressing. (AM)
(Superior Viaduct)

THE FALL – "It's the New Thing/Various Times"

The FALL's second 45, another perfect document of the wiry irate genius that is MARK E. SMITH. In this era the FALL were one of the coolest bands of all time. Propulsive paranoid pop music, skitterish and sarcastic, intelligent and dismissive. Yvonne Pawlett's clammy keyboard a new and life altering edition to the lineup…Listening to this makes me wanna dig out everything from this time and listen to it all and wonder at the spectacle. OG copies are not very expensive if this beautiful RSD artifact is already sold out where you are, but if you don't have this already, do yourself a favor and have a listen! (LG)
(Superior Viaduct)

LA FE – "Ruido, Distorsión y Rock" EP

The A-side is an uncomfortable tom-heavy punk stomper. The flip is more upbeat and benefits from a catchy guitar line. The attitude knob on the vocals is turned up to about nine. I'm pretty sure this Madrid trio includes at least two guys from bands you already like, and though there is very little music on this disc, it's solid material. Your call. (MA)
(Blondes Must Die)

FILTHY TWOLIPS – "Get Moist" CD

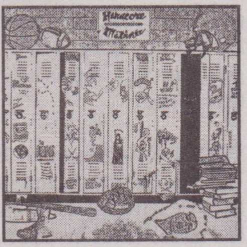
Bouncy, dumb, melodic shit punk with raspy lyrics about toilets, shitting, blowjobs in the bathroom at a party, and fucking all night. They play five songs in about three and a half minutes. Don't worry, though. They put each song on the CD four times. I was not at all surprised to find that they opened for the QUEERS and the NOBODYS. (GH)
(self-released)

FOSTER CARE – "Sterilization" LP

Total ringer, this one. *Sterilization* seems tailor made for Total Punk: near-hardcore tempos mashed up with hooks as severe and winning as those heard outta GG KING and that ilk. Incredibly satisfying and designed for repeated spins, which is a certainty. Expert punking? The LP concludes with "Banned in the MRR," which may warrant such discipline, though when I played it over the compound megaspeaker, everyone on the 1,000-acre grounds seemed to think it was "just OK." (MC)
(Total Punk)

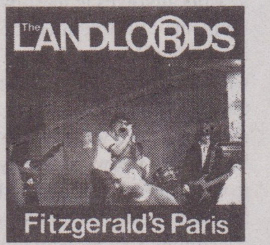
THE FOX SISTERS / THE TELEVISIONARIES – split EP

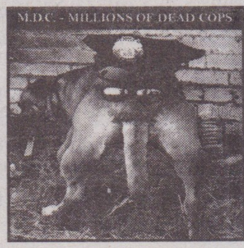
The TELEVISIONARIES lay down two tracks: a goofy surfy love song that wouldn't have been too far out of Lookout! sights during a certain dark period and, save for a reverb drenched guitar, a pretty much note for note version of "Love Potion No. 9." The FOX SISTERS play some decent low budget rock'n'roll, sorta like the WOGGLES with horns and an organ. These two bands seem like they like the rock'n'roll



THE HAVENOTS
ROCK 'N' ROLL
WEEKEND

KITTEN FOREVER
7 HEARTS





party. I get that. Change out that boring cover and I'd flip this thing over a few more times. That goofy-ass surf song is hot, though! (DZ)
(Reel Time)

FUCKING – "Intimacy Issues" EP

After last year's amazing first EP, Minneapolis' FUCKING doesn't disappoint. More chaotic and insane hardcore that I'd put in the corral with WRANGLER BRUTES, FAILURES, or Midwest contemporaries the BUG. The vocal delivery is off beat and disorienting, and the lyrics are entirely on point (*"Get laid or die tryna / Get used to disappointment / Extinction thru embarrassment")*. They threw me for a loop with a slower (than usual) track on the A-Side with a discernable tempo and a saxophone melody, but like the tasteful linocut stamp of the singer's butt on the sleeve, I'm just enamored by what this band delivers. Available for the ultimate punk concept price of $5 (*"Children must be told what to do / Learn a simple task subjugated by a job / Make them pay $5 / We want $5"*). (BW)
(self-released)

GAY MAYOR – "Don't Tread on Pete" EP

Wild and manic hardcore from the wild and manic region known as Western Massachussetts. They might even fall into the category of what my fellow reviewer WN might call "No slow, all go fastcore" in the vein of NINE SHOCKS TERROR or WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? They sing about ridiculous shit like, like burning down libraries and having a tick on your dick. They somehow cram enough bonafide riffs into their manic onslaught that it sticks in your fucking head long after the needle has left the record. (GH)
(Gut Freak)

GOMS – "Ball & Chain" EP

Vancouver's GOMS recorded this debut EP in Februrary 2015, which in itself is a testament to how fucking long it takes to put out a record. Are they still a band? The insert photo is dated July 4th, 2015, which gives us at least five months of verifiable activity. But check it out—this record's artwork involves at least two Fundamental Design Elements of Modern Hardcore (brick wall, check; chain, check). Do I need to tell you precisely where on the spectrum between DYS and SSD the riffs fall? You can look at the cover and probably figure out what tempo this record is going to be. GOMS know what they're doing, and they do it well. Something about this record sounds particularly unhinged and wild, belying the stylistic constraints I've already talked up here. "Strapped Down" is the closest this record gets to having a ripper, and on the A-side, which is all about coping with mental illness, it's probably got my favorite lyrics: "*Strap me down / put me out / inject a drug / I can't pronounce*." The B-side, in turn, looks outwards. "Herd Mentality" and "Mad World" set their sights on conformists and the status quo, respectively. If you can pronounce or even spell Alpranzolam [sic] this is not a record for you. See the rest of you brainiacs in the pit. (EW)
(Slow Death)

THE GUILLOTINES / THE PAGANS – split EP

Holy shit, the motherfucking PAGANS! One of my all-time favorite bands. If you haven't heard "What's This Shit Called Love" or "Six and Change" by now, well then...you haven't. Here Mike Hudson leads a geriatric version featuring a *The Spaghetti Incident?*-era GUNS N' ROSES member in a song that's pretty fucking good in an aged rocker way. Sorta like what STIV BATORS would be doing if he were alive these days. The GUILLOTINES play pretty cookie cutter rockin' punk, but "She's All Alcohol" is worth your time. A much better record than I would have imagined. Go figure. It's time for my nap. (RO)
(Just 4 Fun)

THE GUILLOTINES / THE PAGANS – split EP

OK. Before you get too excited, this is the '10s version of the PAGANS. It's Mike Hudson backed by some LA musicians. It is what you imagine that would sound like. It's rather lame hard rock that's overproduced and features the kind of guitar wanking that a guy who played on a '90s GUNS N' ROSES album would do. I think Hudson is still cool. His vocals are not that bad, a little gruff and strained, but it is a shame he feels the need to kick the PAGANS corpse with this offering. The GUILLOTINES boast having original PAGANS singer Robert Conn. He sings on the "Six and Change" 7" and returned to the band to play bass in the '80s. The GUILLOTINES have a grittier sound. It's more straight forward rock'n'roll with a rough edge. The second song, "She's All Alcohol," opens with a bass riff very similar to "Eyes Of Satan." But again with the guitar wanking. Enough already. (CK)
(Just 4 Fun)

THE HAVENOTS – "Rock 'N' Roll Weekend" LP

THE HAVENOTS from Japan released this LP a couple of years ago, but I guess it's just now being released in the States. This band walks that fine line between punk rock, rock'n'roll , and new American Oi!. The first song is the title track and it's a mid-tempo punk rock song. The second track, "Too Young To Patience," is a pretty tired ska punk song. The singer sounds like a cleaner version of Tim Armstrong, which is kinda bleh, but with a Japanese accent, which makes it pretty fucking sweet. Overall, decent songs but very predictible and lacking of energy and originality. "Kids All Right" and "Kill The Generation" are better—I think "Kill The Generation" sounds like a polished CLASH song sung in Japanese. Side-B starts with "My Red Guitar" and is a nice tune. Catchy songwriting and packed with melody. It might even be anthem-y for certain scenes and crowds! Some of the songs are sung in Japanese but most of them are in English. For fans of RANCID, the CLASH, SOCIAL DISTORTION. (DB)
(Dead Beat)

ANDY HUMAN AND THE REPTOIDS – "Sarcastic" EP

Success in short format appears to be the first Reptoid goal achieved in the opening fiscal quarter of 2016. The title track is The REPTOIDS at their provoking, pulverizing best: phased-out earworm punking that drives oddly into your temples. Sax bleat as a hook coupled with Human's best, most bizarre vocals to date. It's all just too sick. "Shit & Grit" is moodier, possibly more endearing, no less inventive, and the EP's hidden star. An ace CHRISMA cover / send-up closes things out, which is as cool of a wink as I can think of. This band continues to be a total dominator, and Human's had an ace fuckin' month with this and that great debut from the WORLD. A surefire entry in my 2016 top honors list. Find immediately, spin often, mutate at will. (MC)
(Goodbye Boozy)

THE HUNCHES – LP

Thee Savage Young HUNCHES! Almost Ready has pulled off the nearly unthinkable and collected the band's very first recording sessions onto one handsome (and shockingly pink) platter. Unlike many at *MRR* back then (see Bruce Roehrs's review of their first LP!), I was smitten with the band early on, so hearing these primeval tunes brings lotsa smiles. Ironically, I think these recordings would've been embraced by a wider range of folks had they come out at the time, but thankfully the HUNCHES opted to piss in nearly everyone's mouth to start their discography (and kept going further from there). At this early stage, the HUNCHES were simply angry young punks who could throw a grimace your way with the best of the (then) young guns in the early '00s garage punk scene. Sunglasses, attitude, sneer, etc. Songs like "Radiation" and "Watcha Gonna Do?" are more directly influenced by the Crypt Records axis of thangs than anything the band would release during their operating years, and these moments will no doubt throw those uninitiated *Exit Dreams* fans for a monster loop. I dig 'em fine, but it's tunes like the colossal "Dance Alone," "Pamela," and "You'd Better Think Twice" that show the band distinguishing themselves early, mangling choice sources like Cle-punk and the SAINTS into something wonderfully their own. It's also evident that the unhinged vocals of Hart Gledhill were there at the start. A natural born maniac, that guy, and coupled with Gunn's bonkers guitar it's a match made in degenerate heaven. Kudos to all involved for allowing enough time to pass to have these excavations further the legacy rather than diminish it. Excellent! (MC)
(Almost Ready)

I HAVE NO MOUTH AND I MUST SCREAM – LP

In the wake of the current abundance of indie/shoegaze reunions of bands returning from the dark corners of the '90s, this Berlin outfit carves out a contemporary sound with these given influences. I'd say their sound is closer to the lesser-known UK shoegaze/post-punk acts such as CHAPTERHOUSE, ADORABLE, and PALE SAINTS than

the more obvious MY BLOODY VALENTINE or the CURE. Insert with full lyrics in English. Interested to hear more from them in the future. (LT)
(self-released)

THE INCREDIBLE KIDDA BAND – "Bullet In My Heart/The Girl Said No"
Fans of bright, saccharine power pop can do no better than the KIDDA BAND, who churned out such an incredible series of pop gems in the late '70s you might suspect Jesus had risen from the grave and settled in Nuneaton, West Midlands, to pen the tunes Himself. Despite some predictions, the year 2000 didn't bring The Rapture and elevation of the faithful to Heaven for an eternity of bliss—however, the KIDDAS' *Too Much, Too Little, Too Late!* double album, a near-flawless collection of studio demos that came out that same year, was mankind's consolation. More recently, a clutch of 45s with previously released material has trickled out. Both cuts on this single first appeared on *Too Much*; they feature warm production, catchy guitar lines, pulsing bass, and hooks for days (along with some cringeworthy lyrics like "*I saw she got that sparkle in her eyes / I saw her dress was cut so low / So I asked to take her home*"). Honestly, if this stuff floats your boat, I'd just suggest tracking down the full collection, but this 7" will please both completists and first-timers. Limited to 500 copies. (CS)
(Last Laugh)

KITTEN FOREVER – "7 Hearts" LP
This is BRATMOBILE if the guitar was swapped out for a bass, rendering a heavier thrash running along with bratty vocals and girl gang chants. It's a pretty raging "party with me" punker record—all the jams are fast and pogo ready, but it still stays pretty dark overall. This band is definitely '90s worship—there are shades of RED AUNTS, JACK OFF JILL, FLUFFY, and so forth. The only thing this record suffers from is length and sameness—if it were half as long, all the songs wouldn't start sounding alike. (MM)
(Atlas Chair)

KONAD – "Irae Dei" CD
This is some fuckin' heavy, hardcore-influenced, up-tempo metal from Portugal's KONAD. None of the songs hit three minutes—hooray. The pro production is beefy and tough, but not slick. I think every track has a guitar solo. The band has a vicious sound along the lines of DISFEAR. Unfortunately, they lack the hooks to really stand out. Lyrics are in their native language. I'm down with this sort of thing, but this band didn't quite bring enough to get me thrashing. (JM)
(Zerowork)

KOVAA RASVAA – "Pimeä Laskeutuu" EP
Four servings of blistering Finnish thrash. No solos. A couple of heavy intros and breaks give you a chance to catch your breath, but this flies mostly in high gear. Both the D-beat and fastcore beats are used effectively, but the classic flailing Finnish hardcore sound is at the root of it all. These women shred. Get it. (MA)
(Svart)

KRIEGS LEGION – "The Anti-State War Machine" EP
Pro gear, pro attitude metal punk featuring too-long songs and hackneyed, if well-meaning, political lyrics. The guitar player shreds but writes solos like he'd rather be playing in ZEKE or something. I don't like this record and I don't think you will either. (AU)
(Streetrock)

THE LANDLORDS – "Fitzgerald's Paris" LP
People have been freaking out about this and when I first put it on I couldn't figure it out. Another reissue of an early '80s HC band? The first side is cool but not remarkable, decent burly HC and post-SST gnarl with added HC-era COC touches. Once you flip the record to Side-B, though, all is revealed! This is the LANDLORDS unreleased second LP, which was recorded over a period of two years at Inner Ear. The first side was recorded at the beginning of 1986, the second at the end of 1987, and it's like two different bands…It's weird/wild guitar shred that evokes CRUCIFUCKS, SACCHARINE TRUST splutter, probably in the context of the noise rock/Touch & Go scene that was emerging from the Midwest at that point in time. The LP comes with a color insert with cool photos and zine and flyer reproductions that show that they played with MALEFICE, UNITED MUTATION, SPIKE IN VAIN, and COC, which all totally makes sense, turning teenage frustration hardcore into some other wild thing. They had co-conspirators! The vocalist sounds possessed and somehow reminds me of SPIKE IN VAIN *and* Revolution Summer! Really strange and unique band and a cool document of a specific era of HC. Worth grabbing for sure. (LG)
(Feel It)

LESS FORTUNATE SONGS – "Let's Talk About…" CD
This quartet would appear to be from Spain, though they sing in flawless English and have a more than adequate grasp of that speedy melodic "skate punk" sound. No lyrics included, but so far as I can tell, they are explicitly political in all of the right (i.e. left) places. Much akin to an early UNWRITTEN LAW with brains. Eight short tracks clocking in at a few seconds over twenty minutes in total. Not so bad. Not so bad at all. (RK)
(Picnic)

LIFE FUCKER – "Nightmare" EP
Nasty blown-out snotty punk with that snappy 1-2-1-2 beat in full effect. Berlin's LIFE FUCKER play it faster than the current North American trendsters, and they make it sound *real* sleazy, an obvious plus. The record closes with "Deathwatch," the standout for me in terms of construction, delivery, and intensity, if only because it departs from the vibe of the rest of the slab a little. (Upon subsequent listens, I retract that statement—I like it the most because it bangs the most.) Put your pogo boots on, because this one will bounce you off the fukkn walls. (WN)
(Static Age)

THE LIPPIES – CD
A female-fronted pop punk band from Michigan here. These folks remind me a lot of TILT and more currently the INTERRUPTERS without the ska leanings. This is a decent release with a couple of acoustic tunes in the mix. They sort of remind me of an old school Warped Tour-type band, if that isn't a contradiction. Good for what it is. (RL)
(Red Scare)

LIQUID GENERATION – "Quarter To Zen" CD
LIQUID GENERATION were an '80s Seattle band who played '60s style garage. They existed for one year, 1984, and released one posthumous 7", "Quarter To Zen/I Love You," in 1985. Both songs are included here along with four additional original songs and ten covers. The band has a good sound. There's a punkiness, but also some psyche-ness. They know their stuff. Plus they look like a bunch of goofballs. They are in their twenties and thirties with a seventeen-year-old singer.

MDC
MILLIONS OF DAMN CHRISTIANS

M D C
SHADES OF BROWN

Moto
PERTTI

NO ANGER CONTROL
DRUNK IN A DUMPSTER

NO USE
FOR A NAME
ALL THE BEST SONGS

They get extra points for all that. This collection is probably unnecessary and the '10s garage rockers who should take notice won't, but who cares? I like having it out there. (CK)
(Green Monkey)

LOCK – "The Cycle" EP
Fast hardcore punk—I mean, I could stop there and the review would be accurate. With '80s riffs, '90s personal frustration oozing out of the lyrics, '00s production, and all delivered with '10s intensity (and a healthy penchant for The Mosh), I'd say these kids have pretty much covered all the bases, but they've done so without sounding the least bit stale or contrived. When LOCK belts out *"Sleep long / sleep well / in the bed you've made,"* it's so much more than your average "stabbed in the back" missive…it's 71 seconds of pure disgust. (WN)
(Iron Lung)

MDC – "Elvis In the Rhineland: Live in Berlin" LP
Ugh, this is one of those Record Store Day releases that's keeping the records of today from coming out in a timely fashion. This is a nice, clean-sounding recording of MDC performing in Berlin (duh) in 1988, running through a set of classics, some less classic later material, and some truly unfortunate covers (Herb Alpert. Really?). Still, this is the classic lineup with X-Con Ron and Franco ripping it up on guitar and bass, so even the lesser material is played tight and fast as fuck, and the blazing renditions of "John Wayne Was a Nazi," "Dead Cops," and "Born to Die" are definitely worth the price of admission. It's a bit of a bummer that a lot of Dave's stage banter seems to have been elided from the record (of course there just isn't room on the vinyl for 25 songs *and* long political raps, but still….), but as far as live records go, this is a good one. (AU)
(Beer City)

MDC – "Hey Cop!!! If I Had A Face Like Yours…" LP
From 1991, this is a slower and tamer, more rock'n'roll MDC. From the mid-tempo "Millions Of Dead Cops" opener, you know you're in for something a little different. It's as politically charged, topically relevant, and in your face as ever, but the music on tracks like "US War #54" wouldn't have been caught dead amongst the light speed attacks of the first few records. That said, I'll take self-indulgent tracks like "I Do Not Wish" over the majority of modern punk, and there are still classic MDC burners ("The Jew That Got Away," "Gig And Die In LA"). I know there is a *lot* of reissued MDC wax to wade through this spring, and I wouldn't necessarily *start* with this one, but I certainly wouldn't slag it off either. Oh yeah, dude from RANCID plays bass. (WN)
(Beer City)

MDC – "Metal Devil Cokes" LP
Some of my fellow reviewers may scoff at the many MDC reissues being reviewed this month, but I can't help but grin. I have a total soft spot for MDC even at their worst, which this by no means is. MDC capture the spirit of total misfits in hardcore and San Francisco in all its long gone weirdo glory. Horrible benefit shows in Golden Gate Park and Mission shitholes with small children and lesbian hippies and drag queens in abundance. Wonderfully overly bizarre, socially conscious lyrics abound such as on "Tofu Spaghetti," "Dirty Harry For President," or the hilarious lounge music environmental pollution death serenade of "Acid Reindeer." Sure, MDC were sorta beating a dead horse in 1989, and Ex-Con Ron Posner's guitar is sorely missing here, but there are both bright moments (like the title track) and some that'll make you cringe (like "Love Potion Number 9"). They're the GRATEFUL DEAD of punk. So love them or hate them and I still won't really care. (RO)
(Beer City)

MDC – "Shades of Brown" LP
Say what you will about MDC, they've never been afraid to take a stand—be it denouncing the Duke from deep in the heart of Texas, calling out the BAD BRAINS for their homophobic views, or simply expressing a deep alienation from society and all the confusion and rage that comes with it. "*What makes America so straight and me so bent?*" 1993's *Shades of Brown* tackles familiar issues (race, poverty, drugs, religion, to name a few) in a familiar style (mainly non-descript hardcore with lots of lyrics), adding some metallic flourishes and a few curveballs (the WOODY GUTHRIE cover, the melodic anthem "Borrowed Time," the rap track about killing meat-eaters). I can't imagine many people were clamoring for a reissue of this record, but here it is anyway...I'm tempted to quote the title to track five. (CS)
(Beer City)

MDC – "This Blood's For You" LP
Another log in this month's Beer City RSD turd bath. In hindsight, it's pretty ridiculous that there are even songs on this LP, meaning that someone took the time to write them, record them, and press them. This is from an era when shocking and offensive names and cover art could move 5-10,000 units simply for existing. For a gateway band, I was always struck by how mediocre and disappointing MDC were, that first STAINS 7" their one saving grace. By the time they released this in 1987, they'd made improvements to the lackluster production of their early releases. Sadly, they'd also branched out into Zappa concept record joke punk territories. At least now I can say I've listened to it. Clear wax with printed inner. (GB)
(Beer City)

MEAN JEANS – "Nite Vision" EP
Portland's MEAN JEANS are back and they are ready to kick your ass! The title track, while perhaps more serious-sounding compared to a lot of other MEAN JEANS songs, completely shows how talented these guys are as songwriters and as players, reminiscent of '80s RAMONES. Side-B is definitely more of the MEAN JEANS that we know and I'm so fucking happy about that. They haven been one of my favorite bands over the last few years and now I remember why. In a genre that can often be cheesy, repetitive, and boring, MEAN JEANS are fucking dominating with energy, snottiness, and slime! "Now I Wanna Be Your Dog" sounds nothing like the STOOGES. It's a beautifully written pop punk song, something that over the past seven years this band has proven they can do and do very fucking well. Same goes for the second song on Side-B, "69 Tears." I can't wait for this band to come back to the Bay Area and play a real punk show (not opening for NOFX). If you dig goofy RAMONES-inspired punk rock with attitude, check out this EP, and if you didn't already know MEAN JEANS, go listen to their first and second LPs! (DB)
(Fat Wreck Chords)

METAL URBAIN – "Panik/Lady Coca Cola"
"Why do you sing in French?" "So Americans can't understand us." That's what METAL URBAIN told *Search and Destroy* back in 1977 and it still cracks me up. This is a reissue of one of my favorite singles of all time. It's the band's first, originally released in 1977 on France's Cobra records (Fun fact: Their second single would be the first release on Rough Trade). METAL URBAIN is credited with starting synth punk. But this is a million times better than any connotation that brings to mind in 2016. There are two guitars, a synth, a drum machine, and a pissed off singer. "Panik" is angry and frantic. "Lady Coca Cola" is slower and more sinister. Both songs are amazing. If you don't have an original, you need this reissue. Duh. (CK)
(Alternative Tentacles)

M.O.T.O. / PERTTI KURIKAN NIMIPÄIVÄT – split 12"
You'll know PERTTI KURIKAN NIMIPÄIVÄT (P.K.N.) as the Finnish band of developmentally disabled punks that challenged for the 2015 Eurovision Song Contest, or maybe from their earlier split with HARD SKIN. This split finds them in good form, three short sharp blasts of primitive hardcore punk. On the flip, you get four more great upbeat power pop songs from MASTERS OF THE OBVIOUS. Paul M.O.T.O. just has a great ear for melody. The Finnish connection is that these songs were recorded during M.O.T.O.'s Finnish tour. (AM)
(Blast Of Silence)

MR. AND THE MRS. / MYSTERY BLOOD – split 7"
I am all for the novelty of the lathe cut record. It's quite cool to have a record that was hand pressed even if you have to force it onto the spindle of your turntable (and of course vigorously coax it back off). This split 7" even comes with instructions on how to get your stylus into the record's grooves. If that's too complicated, there is a bonus CD of both songs included. MYSTERY BLOOD's "Fuck My Way Up To The Pizza" is a rambling, jangling tune. It was probably the first and only take. MR. AND THE MRS.'s "The Killing Floor" is a bit more song-like. The riff trudges along and the vocals are more pronounced. Both songs are lo-fi poppish-garage. The sound is mud-

dy and quiet. It's cool, but I am afraid without the oddity of the format these recordings would get little attention. (CK)
(Woody)

MRS. MAGICIAN – "Eyes Over Town/I'm Glad You're Dead"
Basic power pop/'70s AM radio sounding tunes by this new to me San Diego band. The A-Side is extremely catchy and the swirly organ breaks are a nice touch, as is the guitar fuzz and tambourine shakin'. The B-Side is a "downer track" and slithers around with a hazy and sort of lazy psych-rock feel. Not bad. Overall pretty good—the only bummer is that I wish the singer's voice didn't remind me of TOM PETTY so much. (JD)
(Swami)

MUSTANG – "Poison/Blood Rain"
MUSTANG have been kicking around the Japanese hardcore scene since the late '90s, but it's been an awfully long time since they've had a new release. Now they're back with this too-short banger that clearly demonstrates that in the interim they have only honed their skill and their fury. This is 100% pure, unadulterated Japanese fucking hardcore punk, complete with raging solos and massive gang choruses. "Poison" is a straightforward rager, with a memorable chorus (try to not shout "*We are poison!*" by the second time it comes around!), while "Blood Rain" mixes things up a bit with a rock'n'roll solo that recalls their *Free Style* record and a huge breakdown at the end. Can't wait for more, MUSTANG are still hot fire. (AU)
(Kämäset Levyt / Tampere Hardcore Coalition)

NASA SPACE UNIVERSE – "70 AD" 12"
The SoCal hardcore band with the hottest logo in the game flames out with this final release after about ten years in the DIY business. Faster than STICKMEN WITH RAYGUNS, slower than DIE KREUZEN, and running with those bands in the shared nature of being fucked with no solution to the lifelong problem of living in this world. They treat us with nods toward RIK AGNEW and SKEWBALD / GRAND UNION here and there, but they keep it mostly in the ugly and aforementioned pocket. The wretching vocal spurts have a little reverb, maybe to make them feel a little more of a different kind of freaky. I'd really just like this guy to barf into my ear with no effects between us, like I think other releases were done, but props for still trying to do things a little differently after a decade instead of just giving up and phoning it in like some bands do in their first year. (BW)
(Feel It)

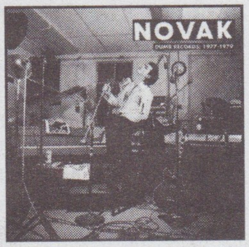
NORTHLESS / PRIMITIVE MAN – split LP
NORTHLESS is rad! They sound like what NEUROSIS wishes they could sound like, and I say that as a pretty big NEUROSIS fan. Their side is three intense dirges that will take you far out to the edges of sanity, and they don't need guitar pedals or synthesizers to get you there, either. Their excellent composition and ability are right on the brink. So go easy man, you might not come back. PRIMITIVE MAN sounds like a Cro-Magnon mushroom trip that is not going well. No mellow contemplation here, just a violent, bloody freakout. This is some frightening fucking doom hatred. No melody, no solos, just hand me a club and let's kill. This is the best record I have reviewed this year! (BA)
(Halo of Flies)

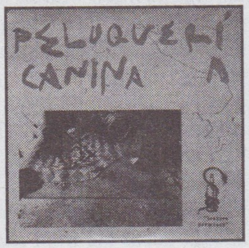
NO USE FOR A NAME – "All The Best Songs" 2xLP
Fuuuuck...I have to take a deep breath and prepare myself for two entire records of "best of" shit of melodic punk, or whatever people call that super formulaic fast shit. Damn, damn, damn! The first track is a total bummer, but these guys have been doing this for a long time and even I have to admit that I can remember liking some of the genre's early heavy hitters. There are even some tight moments on this release. That being said, a million bands all over the planet have locked into this formula, and I can't stand this stuff. (DZ)
(Fat)

NOVAK – "Dumb Records: 1977–1979" LP
If the only thing NOVAK ever did was produce the second CRIME single ("Murder by Guitar/Frustration"), he could safely assume his untouchable Solid Gold Punk Rock Status was eternally secure. But NOVAK's many late '70s 45s and EPs on his own Dumb Records label are all amazing, unjustly ignored at the time, and, I can tell you, ignored well into the '90s as well, when I was practically the only person I knew who rated them at all. They have a '60s farfisa-organ feel, a downtown NYC feel, a proto '80s New Wave feel, a creepoid power pop feel. I guess that fact that they are all over the place style-wise held people off, but this LP comp (all the singles are on here except for a Swiss-label re-recording of his second) should right this wrong. This will probably be the most surprisingly enjoyable reissue you pick up this month. (RW)
(Athena / Orion Read)

NUEVA FUERZA – "Mundo Material" EP
Okay, I'll put aside the fact that their logo bears more than a vague resemblance to the National Front one. This new, ripping Barcelona export boasts a to the point, stripped down hardcore punk sound completely devoid of breakdowns and gang vocals. Packing in nine pummeling tracks, you definitely will get a bang for your buck. To me, this sounds faithful to the '80s Barcelona hardcore tradition, particularly GRB. The packaging is very DIY, with a handwritten insert including all the lyrics, which are very honest and cathartic. I think anyone following current European, and especially Spanish, hardcore punk will dig this for sure. (LT)
(Discos Enfermos)

PEARS – "Green Star" LP
Yes! New Orleans punk rockers PEARS are back with their second LP! When I heard this band's first record, I thought it was cool that there was a band that can find the right balance between just really good and catchy songwriting and angry as fuck, fast and heavy hardcore parts, but it didn't really catch me right away. Then I saw them play a house show in Vegas and fell in love! They also set Thee Parkside on fire last August during the Fat twenty-five year anniversary festival. Fat has been lacking amazing younger bands lately, but I have to give it to them, releasing this LP (and the MEAN JEANS EP) makes up for it. Holy shit, PEARS fucking deliver! Just like the first LP, it has the poppy choruses, it has the anger, and it's oozing that energy. I have a feeling this one is staying under the needle for a while. "Cumshots" is packed with fury and speed, "The Flu" is a straight-up fast punk song, "Partridge" is what I would imagine PEARS' version of a DESCENDENTS-esque type song to be, and it's all just so good! If you enjoy '90s melodic punk rock mixed with heavy hardcore (and sometimes metal parts) played and recorded super fucking well, then check out this one. And if you enjoy this kind of punk and haven't seen PEARS, go fucking see them when they play near you! "*No God! No hope!*" (DB)
(Fat Wreck)





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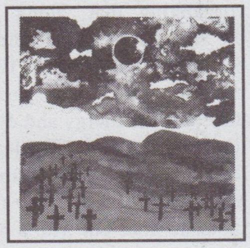
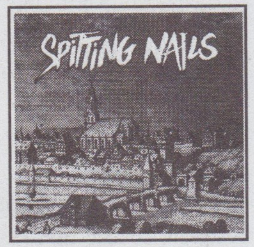




SPLIT VEINS

PELUQUERIA CANINA – "Jovenes Promesas" LP

Really well executed bouncy punk from Madrid boasting a member of JUANITA Y LOS FEOS, but with more of a CRAMPS style going on. They remind me a bit of old Madrid punk like LARSEN mixed with '80s dark and surfy punk from Los Angeles like 45 GRAVE or RED KROSS. "Mil Demonios" is my favorite track, with the right balance of energy and melancholy. Hope I get to see these guys sooner or later. Beautiful artwork and packing an insert with all the lyrics in Spanish and one in Basque. Pick this up to know what's going on in the Madrid underground these days. (LT)
(Going Underground)

ANDY PLACE AND THE COOLHEADS – "Summer Of The Beast" EP

Huge sounding kitchen-sink garage punk from the Pacific Northwest. There's a heaviness to it all that keeps me from focusing on the sparkling clean sound, which is a major savior. The mood is an even split between frustration and inspiration, with the latter actually emerging victorious. Kinda cool! The odd winner of the lot is "A Song For Mick Jones," which is legit, heartfelt, and not at all what I expected to hear today (or any other, really). A decent EP and probably lotsa fun live (missed 'em recently...bummer). (MC)
(Jonny Cat)

THE RAYDIOS – "Craps/Teacher's Pet"

My heart hangs heavy while spinning this, the final 45 from Japan's RAYDIOS. I've always felt that this band was underappreciated, especially considering that, along with FIRESTARTER, the RAYDIOS are the direct progeny and sonic brethren of the mighty TEENGENERATE. Is the cleaner production the deal-breaker? Perhaps the dialed-down energy and dialed-up hooks? Maybe it's been terribly difficult to get the majority of their output outside of Japan? Regardless, Secret Mission has done the heavy lifting and ensured the band goes out with a proper bang. "Craps" is everything you wanna hear outta main man Fink: ringing, completely breakneck punk that's timeless. "Teacher's Pet" is more in line with other recent RAYDIOS releases in that it's mid-tempo, vaguely glam-inspired, and equal parts catchy and mean. Big guitar à la the DICTATORS, thank you muchly! (MC)
(Secret Mission)

REPTOIDES – EP

This is so fucking killer! Frantic blown-out miscreant sounds from Santa Caterina, Mexico, total destruction, this is the end of music, the end of humans! Alien punk wild shit, like early '80s Italy squat sounds in the Mexican desert, but cooler and more fucked up than that! The intro song is so insane, definite alien influence, then we descend into the gleeful destruction that is the rest of the EP. If you dug RATAS DEL VATICANO, you would get high on these fumes for sure, but this is somehow imbued with a joyful hate. It's no mere nihilistic rage, the REPTOIDES are having fun as they destroy, and it means that you as the listener are forced to keep playing this over and over again until your thoughts are one with the primeval ooze. Alright! (LG)
(Puro Pedo / World Gone Made)

RETRETES – "Aguantando Como Pueda" EP

Daaaaaaamn, this shit is tight!! Hailing from Mexico (Monterrey?), RETRETES plays raw-as-fuck, home recorded garage punk that reminds me of the PLUGZ, the DILS, and even LOS SAICOS! RETRETES plays with a drunken, intense energy that is immediately infectious and demands repeated listening. I can't recommend this highly enough. Truly maximum rock'n'roll. (GH)
(Puro Pedo / World Gone Mad)

RÖVSVETT – "Ryssen Kommer" EP

Here we have a nice slab of old school Swedish hardcore by a band that has been around since 1983. They don't fall into any of the trappings that many of our geezer comrades often do, like cheesy production or lame butt metal vibes. This is some real gritty, angry as fuck music that stays urgent. So pick this one up cause these guys still got the rage after all these years. (BA)
(Just 4 Fun)

SCAB EATER – "Mind Trench" EP

SCAB EATER is a mostly Australian, partially American hardcore band based out of Melbourne. They have carved out a bit of a reputation (including an interview in *MRR* #389) due to their insane touring schedule, necessitated in part by their American singer's need to get out of the country at least every three months to renew his visa. It's a band that plays a lot, making any space they set foot into their *zone*, including the studio. This record can both rip and rage. The title track drops some grooves that wouldn't be too far out of place in a NO STATIK set, then rotate it out for a slamworthy Bostonesque hook. There's only one legit breakdown on the record, which I respect. They don't oversell it. Lyrically this covers a lot of worthwhile ground, paralleling the refugee crisis in Europe with Australia's; linking fascism and religious intolerance in Greece, the US and Australia; even covering indigenous displacement by the Australian mining industry. Tracks like "Lines Drawn in Blood" have got something—*rhythm*—that a lot of hardcore bands don't really fuck with. This is Australia after all, and much like their compatriots PRAG or OILY BOYS they throw at least a splash of chorus on the guitar. Again, it's pretty tasteful. They even get away with dropping a bunch of pinch harmonics on one track. Don't ask me how. (EW)
(Hardcore Victim)

SHEER MAG – "III" EP

SHEER MAG feels like they might be the only band right now in the DIY punk circle who legitimately plays power pop with no hint or lean to pop punk—or even really a reference to a punk influence at all, aside from the t-shirts the band wears. Everything is mid-paced and nothing you'd describe as hard aside from some vocal attitude. It's not wimpy music, just maybe more rock and less punk. It could be aggressive in the same way that riding a motorcycle and wearing leather makes you look hard even if you listen to the ROLLING STONES more than MOTÖRHEAD. This record makes perfect sense in the chronology of the first two—classic power pop like the NERVES that has slowly added more BOB SEGER. (SHEER MAG is an anomaly to me in the punk scene by making music like *Night Moves* and still getting love from every subgenre of punker.) They take more of the THIN LIZZY dual-guitar leads (everyone likes THIN LIZZY) and expand on the soulful and somber songs of the second 7", though the band was always about revering in heartbreak. As I try to dissect or criticize them, I just find more that I like. (BW)
(Static Shock / Wilsuns Recording Company)

SIN MOTIVO – "El Desierto" LP

There's a Borges story in which, as revenge for being humiliated in a maze by the king of Babylonia, the king of Arabia returns the favor by stranding him in nature's perfect labyrinth: the middle of the desert. As our narrator puts it: "it is the prerogative of God, not man, to strike confusion and inspire wonder." Ask Borges, ask Bolaño, ask SIN MOTIVO: the desert is a fucked up and awful place. Keep all that in mind when you're jamming *El Desierto*. This band excels in slowing it down, but they are still making hardcore rippers, "Pick Your King" brilliance. But when they slow it down, they pull out all the stops. There is even some tambourine low in the mix. Do you remember that part at the end of the BROWN SUGAR LP where they flip a song into the "Interstellar Overdrive" riff? Something about the longer tracks here have the feel of turning the Rat pedals to ten, dropping tabs and trying to play *Piper at the Gates of Dawn* from memory. Includes a bilingual lyric insert and an 11"x18" poster with artwork by Olivia Gibb. Essential record. (EW)
(Adelante Discos / Erste Theke Tonträger / Not Normal)

SPAZZ – "Sweatin' 3: Skatin' Satan & Katon Out of Print & Obscure Tunes '95-'98" CD

Wow, this brings back fond memories of living in New Haven. SPAZZ needs no introduction and this novel and excessive compilation is chock-full of rare compilation, out of print, split EP, and movie soundtrack takes, the third in a series. After doing a little research, I think this is the best of the three from a production, SPAZZ signature sampling, and variety standpoint. Sixty-seven intense powerviolence tracks with all the strange instrumentation and chokehold breakdowns the band is known for. You can get into a hardcore collection this extensive due to its sheer personality. An excellent party sampler when it's time to start another level of party. An aptly named band for sure. (JR)
(Tank Crimes)

SPAZZ – "Sweatin' To The Oldies: All Of The Out Of Print Stuff '93 – '96" CD

No need for a history lesson—if you don't know, then look it up in these fine pages (back issues are your friends, punk!) or on the google machine. Genre defining West Coast powerviolence. SPAZZ didn't

do it first, and perhaps they didn't always do it the best, but since their last show sixteen (!!!) years ago, they have transcended mere band status and become a *thing*. Originally released by Slap-A-Ham in 1997, these sixty-four tracks are culled from then out of print splits with BRUTAL TRUTH, JIMMY WALKER, C.F.D.L., TOAST, CHARLES BRONSON, FLOOR, and RUPTURE, plus live recordings, never released shits, tracks from *Better Read Than Dead, Cry Now Cry Later, El Guapo, Cops Suck, Reality, Let Back/Let Down* comps, and the first EP from 1993. Blasts, jokes, slow motion monster stomp moshes, total irreverence, and impenetrable wit…these tracks need to be available to all punks at all times. (WN)
(Tank Crimes)

SPITTING NAILS – LP

Driven and twangy hardcore with spattering, loose drums that rip between hard rock, D-beat, and blasts. This debut LP from Hamburg embraces queasy, deconstructed tempos from the shadows of HIS HERO IS GONE and HIGH ON FIRE. Dynamic and inspired changes are the metal-charged anchor here, with waves of crust and hardcore on the surface. The loose ends could be tied up a bit tighter, but the proto-metal and blast beat moments do not become overtly contrived and convoluted. Overall, SPITTING NAILS debut is a hasty and impatient delivery that works for this mesh of styles. To be honest, I don't want to like it as much as I do. The vocals border on excessive post-hardcore screamo, but there is a gruff effect that I appreciate and sounds sincere. They're not overdone and are performed with an apathetic anonymous tone. The engineering is extremely fine-tuned. (JR)
(Dream Comes True / Rinderherz)

SPLIT VEINS – 12"

Blown-out modern hardcore from a new-ish London band that immediately brings to mind DESTINO FINAL, but with melodic elements that temper the driving D-beat attack. Reverb-heavy vocals lead the way with rock solid minimalist drumming and bass tuned down to the point that it sounds like it's rumbling up from the basement. There's a nice balance between mid-tempo stomping and speedy driving parts, and they're equally adept at pulling off slow grinding songs like "Pressure" and D-beat blitzes like "Morte E Vida Na Cidade." This band has a clearly defined sound and they pull it off incredibly well, which is very rare indeed. Hats off to SPLIT VEINS, I hope they make it out to our neck of the woods someday! (AU)
(Godzilla)

STEAKKNIFE – "One Eyed Bomb" CD

Garage tinged punk rock'n'roll reminiscent of FLESHIES and flashing more than a hint of Biafra in the vocals. With tracks like "Shake Your Burrito" and "Finger In My Butt," you can get the general idea of where they are coming from, and the tracks are a tight, sweaty, hook-filled good time. (WN)
(Rookie)

SUICIDE – "Cheree/I Remember"

In 2016 I'm going to review a reissue of a SUICIDE 7" and tell you alllll about it? It's more like a cultural IQ test, a set up. Look, friend, if you are leafing through this mag looking for the best way to spend your hard-earned, you should snag the phone out of your significant others' ass-pocket right now and speed-dial this fucking thing onto your turntable, PPD. If the store you're in doesn't have this for sale, just buy a gallon of lighter fluid down the corner and burn that shithole down. Punk Record. (RW)
(Superior Viaduct)

SUICIDE – "Dream Baby Dream/Radiation"

One of the greatest songs ever written, one of the best sensitive punk singles in history, BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN even covered it; I mean Jesus Christ, you should know who SUICIDE is by now. God bless Superior Viaduct for putting this out. Sounds good. (BB)
(Superior Viaduct)

TEEN COOL – "Reading You Yer Rock N Roll Rights" CD

Scummy mix of REGISTRATORS and NEW YORK DOLLS, it's straight bar sleaze brand rock'n'roll punk. *Reading You Yer Rock N Roll Rights* was originally released in 1995, and this latest reissue also includes TEEN COOL's *Room 41* single from 1997. I guess TEEN COOL shared members with little/better known band the MOTARDS. Just brash, adolescent, shitty punk'n'roll. (CR)
(5Bnyc)

TESTOSTEROSO – "Into The Sun" CD

The misunderstood genre of comedy/rock/metal gets a much needed release here with instant classics like "Frat Boy Frankenstein," "Counterfeit Bitch," and jaw dropping artwork of a naked alien cat woman riding a hotdog. *Into the Sun* gives you exactly what you paid for. In my case, that's absolutely nothing. (RO)
(self-released)

TOTEM SKIN – "Weltschmerz" LP

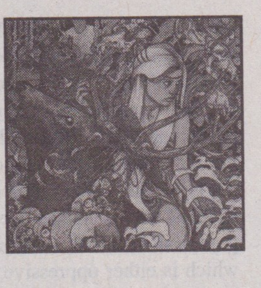
The second full-length from these sophisticated Swedish pummelers, this is precise, polished dark hardcore with an everything-but-the-kitchen-sink approach crossing into metals black and post. Very much the kind of release you would expect from a joint venture between Halo of Flies and Adagio, TOTEM SKIN manage to flip from grinding metalized hardcore to epic EXPLOSIONS IN THE SKY-flavored screamo about as seamlessly as is possible. The melodic side of this band is definitely what keeps it interesting for me—the classic lilting early '00s emo-crust lead at the beginning of "Longing Leans and Beckons" being one shining example—while the breakdowns were a decidedly more brutal pill to swallow. The ultramodern hi-fi recording style is definitely the kind of thing that folks will either love or hate, but one advantage it has here is highlighting just how bonkers good their drummer is. Sheesh! For those of you who like your hardcore emotive, massive, and dizzyingly fast, TOTEM SKIN are here to satisfy the craving. (WB)
(Adagio 830 / Halo of Flies / Protagonist)

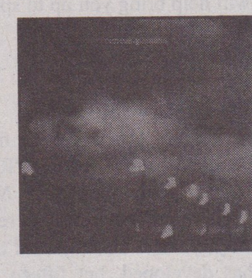
THE TOXICS – "Eyeball City" 10" EP

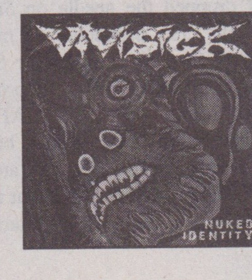
Finnish pound'n'strum that's oh so heavily indebted to OBLIVIANS and their offshoots. This might even qualify as "retro" in terms of Euro garage, as this sorta ape job was all the rage earlier this century, but mutated to gang vocal psych shite. Given that, I welcome the TOXICS offerings and can confirm they have the proper amount of soul, anger, and strained voices to get this at you with the necessary urgency. It's actually a top-notch tribute, but doesn't add much to the template. Good for a few shakes, certainly. (MC)
(Blast Of Silence / Kizmiaz)

UNFUN – "Waterboarding" LP

Did you know that "UNFUN" is also the name of the first JAWBREAKER LP? The thing that sets this record apart from most other pop punk records is the basically insane way it's produced. The kick drum, snare, and the rhythm guitar overpower everything else in the mix, at times leaving the listener







adrift in a sea of cheap, thin, and harsh distortion and echoing boom. However, with a little acclimation, you'll realize that everything is still clear and defined beneath that heavy blanket. It would have made sense for an arch-kvlt black metal CD-R, but it's strange for a melodic pop punk record. On the other hand, this dude now sounds *exactly* like Blake. This would be a fine, if somewhat derivative, pop punk record if not for the bizarre production, which is either oppressive or psychedelic, depending on your personal taste (but still confusing either way). (LP)
(Debt Offensive)

VÄISTÄ – "Mukaudu" LP

I wish that everyone could read the promo sheet that came with this record. It's a track-by-track analysis assuring me that the LP delivers all kinds of groovy hardcore punk with old school fury. Sick punk rock jams, a "certified mosh starter breakdown," hard'n'heavy riffs, sick guitar solos, old school hardcore busts await me…I just have to drop the needle and then "It's time to bust it!" So… yeah, I guess my job is done here, right? But I'm gonna bust it right quick and see if I have anything to add. Here goes: I mean…it's pretty much like the promo sheet says. Tough, mostly mid-tempo clean cut arena hardcore with plenty of rock'n'roll jams (one might even suggest "groovy" as an adjective), geared for the pro club circuit. Take away the screaming vocals and you're basically left with a hard hitting rock record…but 1) maybe that's what the kids want anyway, 2) it's a pretty slammin' rock record at that. Choice track: "Mitä Jos?"—it's like DARKNESS meets GENOCIDE SS with a shameless STOOGES keyboard at the end. (WN)
(Blast Of Silence / Räkälevyt)

LAS VENAS – "Náuseas" EP

Four tracks of fun, minimalist punk from Madrid, all clocking in at under 1:40. The incensed female vocals over crude riffs of "Negar, Mentir, Sufrir" remind me of DIABLESSE GRUPP 6, while the other songs have a more jangly GENERACION SUICIDA vibe. Snotty anti-social lyrics included on the insert, but not much more info than that. This will help bring you up to speed on the state of current Madrid punk. (LT)
(Blondes Must Die)

VICTIMS – "Sirens" LP

I'm not gonna lie, the first thing I did when I heard there was a new VICTIMS record coming out was pull out 2001's *Neverendinglasting* and I wound up stuck on that record for a solid week. Anyone who has followed them knows that sound has developed, but fifteen years after that debut (and nearly twenty since the band started) when I dropped the needle on *Sirens*…I got the same chills. The production is massive, falling in line with Swedes who deliver Scandinavian hardcore with Scandinavian metal production (most notably DISFEAR, WOLFBRIGADE, GENOCIDE SS) and the influences passed back and forth between these bands and early '00s atomic crust like TRAGEDY are obvious and still at work. The melodies are advanced, the wall of guitars is pervasive, and the vocals are pure fire—like they always have been. Maybe this is too slick for the raw punks, maybe it's too metal for the hardcore kids, and maybe it's not metal enough for the hessians, but it's too fukkin good to deny. (WN)
(Tank Crimes)

VIVISICK – "Nuked Identity" LP

Well, shit. My ears are still ringing and my head is still spinning from the record release show for this LP (the band self-released the CD last year, but this is its first appearance on vinyl), so I am very much in the mood to love this LP. Fortunately, it's an easy record to love. VIVISICK have always been an interesting band, always open to experimentation and never conforming to the traditional Japanese HC style. The fascinating liner notes touch on the nature of Buddhism and the desire of the band to create unity and good feelings among their fellow humans, so it's appropriate that much of this record sounds like a party put to tape. The general style is super high-energy thrash punk, with most of the band trading vocals behind Sunao's trademark high-pitched vocal attack. Moments of levity collide with incredibly tight stop-start riffing as the band hops genres from CLASH-style rockers to GAUZE-paced thrash leavened with MISFITS "woah-ohs." Fortunately, the excellent lyrics have equally excellent translations provided in the insert; thoughts about identity, spirituality, kindness, justice, economics, and death all appear. This is a fucking great record, kudos to Tankcrimes for providing it with the wider release it deserves. Also, holy shit…go see this band live if you ever have the chance! (AU)
(Tank Crimes)

WARRIOR TRIBES – "Fugue State" EP

Amazed to see so many upstarts coming outta Chicago these days, WARRIOR TRIBES is one of the latest examples. An unexpected full frontal assault, these guys channel Midwestern hardcore sounds I haven't heard in ages. They're in that mid-'80s mode of pushing the limits of hardcore into weirdo zones without sacrificing any speed or aggression. In the same way you'd fiend for that next increasingly exotic fix, when DIE KREUZEN or SEPTIC DEATH led you to MECHT MENSCH or POWER OF THE SPOKEN WORD. WARRIOR TRIBES has that same blazing intensity you'd hope for on a Version Sound tape or regional comp. All killer no filler, great stuff! On green splatter wax, some with limited black cover art. (GB)
(Hex Enducer Tapes)

WITCHES WITH DICKS – "Not Just A Passing Season" 12"

WITCHES WITH DICKS are back! This is their first release in ten years and it is so fucking good! I was into it as soon as the first track "JK Street" came on, for the catchy songwriting. By the time the second track "Actual Class War" came on, I was fucking sold! *"If you can't take it anymore, we need an actual class war, and if you can't take it anymore, we need to even the score!"* Every song on this LP is fucking gold! It really includes all the best ingredients for a perfect album. These songs are hella catchy (kinda like DILLINGER FOUR) but you will not find any bubblegum here. This shit is raw and angry! And any band that can write a song that is both catchy as hell and angry at the right people should be celebrated. *"This has got to stop! Fuck all the cops!"* I'm in love! In the ten years between this album and their last one, the members of WITCHES WITH DICKS played in BRAIN KILLER, NO SIR I WON'T, SUNSHINE WARD, the CREDENTIALS, the CLOSET FAIRIES, and the FUDDY DUDDYS. This will most likely make my top ten for 2016. Thank you, Boston! (DB)
(Dead Broke)

THE WORLD – "Managerial Material" EP

The resurgence of LORA LOGIC-style saxophone lines in punk is so exciting to me. Don't get me wrong, I'm way into skronk, but it's cool to see that the punk saxophone is not a one trick pony. Find a place among ESSENTIAL LOGIC, MO-DETTES, and AU PAIRS, and the WORLD will be there. I love this band, but on this recording, everything is blended together, nothing sticks out. Somehow this band seemed more jagged and stilted live, a little harsher live. On this, everything sounds underwater, like watching the ocean in a tropical locale. It's good, but there's a real downfall in the overload of phaser or wah or some shit on the guitar that edges it towards the POLICE. Clean it up. (MM)
(Upset the Rhythm)

V/A – "Hardcore Matinee" LP

Collection of, well, guess what? *Not* a lotta hardcore! It's all San Diego bands that are more like variants of underground-ish rock, for lack of a better term. There are some ace tracks by heavy psych/garage dudes—SCHIZOPHONES as well as OCTOGRAPE—alongside some real duds—BEEHIVE & THE BARRACUDAS, WHA, and TEENAGE BURRITOS' generic Burger label '60s worship. There's a HOT SNAKES song, but it's pretty half-assed. The WIDOWS are finally an actual hardcore band and play it mostly good n' mean. PINBACK's folk-pop is lame as hell, as is PLATEAUS' SUPERCHUNK-lite thing. Hell, nearly everything else on Side-B is just OK indie rock, power pop, garage rock, or neo-new wave. All of this is more appropriate for your local college station indie hit parade than *MRR*. (JD)
(Swami)

V/A – "Purity Control" EP

In case you've always wondered, as I have, what an instrumental surf version of the *X-Files* theme would sound like, wonder no more. Your question is answered on this EP, but many more are raised. Such as why would someone release an *X-Files* themed compilation EP? "Why not" is the answer to that, I suppose. There are six variously wacky tracks on this record, from the aforementioned surf rock of THEE WILT CHAMBERLAIN / MARK SNOW, to noisy punk, to folk, to spoken word from ADRIENNE DODT. I'm not sure exactly what it is they were going for, but this is a fine example of whatever that is. (AM)
(What's For Breakfast?)

CONTACT INFO • CONTACT INFO • CONTACT INFO • CONTACT INFO • CONTACT INFO • CONTACT INFO • CONTACT INFO

Adagio 830: Marchlewski Strasse 107, 10243 Berlin, GERMANY, adagio830.de

Alien Snatch: Rodenbergstrasse 31, 10439 Berlin, GERMANY, aliensnatch.com

Almost Ready: 313 President St #2, Brooklyn, NY 11231, almostreadyrecords.com

Alternative Tentacles: PO Box 419092, San Francisco, CA 94141, alternativetentacles.com

Antitodo: antixtodo@gmail.com

Artificial Limbs: electroinsides.bandcamp.com

Athena: athenarecs.com

Atlas Chair: atlaschair.tumblr.com

Beer City: PO Box 1759, Milwaukee, WI 53201, beercity.com

Blast Of Silence: Murtomaantie 6 as 7, 203000 Turku, FINLAND, info@blastofsilence.org

Blondes Must Die: blondesmustdierecords.com

Broccoli Jelly: broccolijelly.com

Certified PR: certifiedprrecords.com

Dead Broke: 139 Huber Ave, Holbrook, NY 11741, deadbrokerec@gmail.com, deadbrokerecords.com

Debt Offensive: debtoffensiverecs.bigcartel.com

Dirt Cult: dirtcultrecords.com

Discos Enfermos: Granja 12, 08024, Barcelona, SPAIN, discosenfermos.com, discosenfermos@gmail.com

E-Meters: emeters.bandcamp.com

Emergency: emergency-rec.cz

Erste Theke Tonträger: erstetheketontraeger.blogspot.com

Fat Wreck: mailbag@fatwreck.com

Feel It: feelit.bigcartel.com

Filthy Twolips: filthytwolips.com

540: chaosintejas.bigcartel.com

Godzilla: godzilladistro.noblog.org, godzilladistro@distruzione.org

Going Underground: 1312 19th St, Bakersfield, CA 93301

Goner: goner-records.com

Goodbye Boozy: goodbyeboozy@tin.it

Green Monkey: greenmonkeyrecords.com

Gut Freak: gutfreak.storeenvy.com

Halo of Flies: Cory von Bohlen, 3444 N. Bremen St, Milwaukee, WI 53212, haloofflies records.com

Hardcore Victim: hardcorevictim.bandcamp.com

Headbones Merch: headbonesmerch.com

Hibachi: 497 Owego St, Painesville, Ohio 44077

Homeless: PO Box 2123 Brunswick East, VIC 3057, AUSTRALIA, homelessvinyl.com.au

Imposter Complex: impostorcomplex.bigcartel.com

Johnny Cat: coolheads.bandcamp.com

Just for Fun: j4f.dk

Kämäset Levyt: Iisakintie 18, 37560 Lempäälä, FINLAND, punkinfinland.net/kamanen

Last Laugh: 313 President St #2, Brooklyn, NY 11231, almostreadyrecords.com

My Minds Eye: 16010 Detroit Ave, Lakewood, OH 44107

12XU: 3005 S Lamar Blvd, D109-403, Austin, TX 78704, 12XU.net, info@12xu.net

Picnic: lessfortunatesongs.bandcamp.com

No Profit: 2724 Glastonbury Rd, Apex, NC 27539, noprofitrecords.com

Not Normal: notnormaltapes.bandcamp.com

Protagonist: PO Box 64574, Tucson, Arizona 85728, protagonistmusic.bigcartel.com

Puro Pedo: grabacionespuropedo.bandcamp.com

Räkälevyt: diyturku.net

Red Scare: redscare.net

Reel Time: PO Box 10512, Rochester, NY 14610, reeltimerecords.bandcamp.com

Rinderherz: rinderherzrecords.ch.vu

Secret Mission: secretmissionrecords.com

Sombras del Progreso: sombrasdiscos.com

Streetrock: streetrockrecords.com

Superior Viaduct: superiorviaduct.com

Svart: svartrecords.com

Swami: PO Box 620428, San Diego, CA 92162, swamirecords.com

Sydney Town: sydneytown.bigcartel.com

Tampere Hardcore Coalition: Kämäset Levyt, Iisavintie 18, 37560 Lempäälä, FINLAND, tamperehardcore.net, punkinfinland.net/kamanen

Tankcrimes: tankcrimes.com

To Live a Lie: tolivealie.com

Total Punk: floridasdying.com

Toxic Pop: toxicpoprecords.com

Trash King Productions: trashkingproductions.com

Upset the Rhythm: upsettherhythm.co.uk

What's For Breakfast?: wfbr.bandcamp.com, wfbrecords@gmail.com

Woody: soundcloud.com/woody-records

World Gone Mad: worldgonemad.bigcartel.com

Slow Death: slow-death-records.bandcamp.com, slowdeathgang@outlook.com

Zerowork: konadband.bandcamp.com

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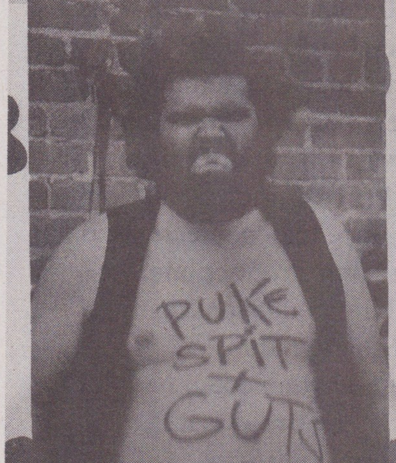
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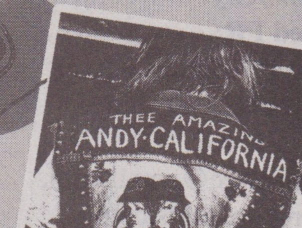
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DEMOS

Send cassettes and CD-Rs to: MRR Attn: Demos, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. CD-Rs with no artwork will not be considered. Reviews by Matt Badenhop, Robert Collins, Michael de Toffoli, Mike Leslie, Jason Ryan, and Alex Turner.

AGGRO MUCHO – Melodic hardcore with earnest vocals and hard-hitting overly technical drums pumped way too high in the mix. Shades of PROPAGANDHI in their approach, yet this is soulless. Fourth track is pretty good, nice mellow guitar lead before it kicks it up a notch (I thought the *"Come On!"* should have been a *"Go!"*, but that's semantics, really). No art, no context, no lyrics, no info, no package whatsoever…just a CD-R and an address. (Robert) (4-song CD-R, lyrics not included, 2525 Goldin Ave, Simi Valley, CA 93065, aggromucho@gmail.com)

ANTICITIZEN – *Bootleg* – Two fukkn fingers thrusted waaaay up in the air, this is by-the-books DIY starter punk. Songs about being punk and other punk things that you might have forgotten were relevant (bike punx, the police state, zombies, working class, and a sub-40 second banger about how "this town" sucks). You shouldn't have forgotten (you got old, most likely, but it's still your fault), but ANTICITIZEN have got you covered…punk. Vaguely metallic, UK influenced, mid-tempo, ramshackle, and lumbering in the best possible way…the cassette is even dubbed like shit, adding authenticity to the listening experience in my expensive San Francisco flat (virtually all flats in San Francisco are expensive, I'm not special). From "Jinx": *"you think you know what punk rock is / but all you do is put us down / when you're in our fukkn town."* This one is a total winner for punks and especially for has-been-punks who forgot how awesome it is to be punk. (Robert) (10-song cassette, no lyrics, anticitizenpunk.bandcamp.com)

ASTHMA / TSA – We got two punk bands from San Francisco on one tape here (yeah, we still have punks in SF). ASTHMA plays dirty and desperate hardcore with cool, slinking guitar leads that slithered into my head and stayed there. They sound like they were recorded in a cave in the best way possible. TSA returns with their singular style of mutated, degenerate, and noisy hardcore, which is so hard to explain but so on point and excellent. You know that guy standing in the corner kinda laughing to himself and then he goes on stage and blows you away? That's TSA. I feel compelled to tell you that there's a noise outro that is anchored by a sample of Ricky from *Trailer Park Boys.* (Greg) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, asthma-sf.bandcamp.com, badbadbadtsa.bandcamp.com)

BACKBITER – *Fuck the Bozos* – Okay, stick with me here, but BACKBITER is from Portland and mixes upbeat, harmonic chorded, melodic punk with almost '90s emo progressions and (gasp) Revolution Summer-style breakdowns *and it is not shitty.* If someone said that to me, I'd be out the door already, running away, but here I am flipping the tape over again. The vocals are half sung and half screamed to vocal cord-shredding intensity. The fact that none of the songs are even remotely close to the two minute mark just adds another log to the fire. You know what I mean? If you like melodic punk, you're already getting this, right? Right. (Greg) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, Dirt Cult, 7930 NE Prescott St, Portland, OR 97218, dirtcultrecords@gmail.com)

BASEMENT RAT – *Pura Mujer* – Two listens in and I can't quite put my finger on *what* is so excellent about the initial offering from Buffalo's BASEMENT RAT. It has attitude, it swings, it definitely rocks, it sounds like it doesn't give a fukk at all, and these tracks are addictive as anything. Spanish language vocals from a singer who can turn a croon into a blood curdling scream in the blink of an eye—fitting for a band that delivers driving '80s punk as effortlessly as erratic start/stop noise rock lumbering through quicksand. Rare to come across something so original that feels instantly familiar—highly recommended. (Robert) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, $5ppd c/o Drug Party Tapes, PO Box 279, Buffalo, NY 14213, drugparty.org, basementrat.bandcamp.com)

BERNAYS PROPAGANDA – *Politika* – Cassette version of the new full-length from this long running Macedonian indie band, *Politika* shows BERNAYS PROPAGANDA straying even further from their angular post-punk roots and venturing into full on '80s territory. This (tape) record strips the band down to stark and minimal new wave sounds with a heavy NDW influence, fronted by and focusing on Kristina's transfixing vocals. When a dance/punk band steps out of their shell, sometimes the result is excellent. (Robert) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, bernayspropaganda.bandcamp.com, landanimaltapes.bandcamp.com)

CHEAP APPEAL – Oh shit! For me this hearkens back to early hardcore when it was fast as shit but still incredibly catchy, but this sounds in no way like a revival act. It's raw, fun, and there's a ton of cool stop-start parts that keep it really interesting. The music reminds me a little bit of an insanely sped up ZERO BOYS if those guys had an even bigger amphetamine addiction, but their singer sounds like a raspy, insane bulldog singing for an Oi! band! Shit is tight! (Greg) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, slow-death-records.bandcamp.com)

THE CHERRIES – So, this tape found its way into the right hands because it features members of GRANDMA'S BOYFRIEND and the BROONIES, who I liked a lot. The CHERRIES are from right here in San Francisco and they play power pop that seems somehow influenced by '90s indie rock. Like, I'm pretty sure these people own some records by the NERVES and PAVEMENT, you know what I mean? Maybe there's even a BEACH BOYS feeling in the melodies. The recording has a raw, stripped down quality that adds a lot of allure. I'm really into this. (Greg) (11-song tape, lyrics not included, Dirty Rabbit, 1839 47th Ave, San Francisco, CA 94122, dacherries.bandcamp.com)

COLD MEAT – *Sweet Treats* – Perhaps my mind is going here because COLD MEAT (from Perth, Australia) covers ELECTRIC EELS, but the looseness and biting treble of the recording brings those guys to mind. Layered on top of that is the utterly desperate, breathless, and ruthless vocals of their singer as she completely annihilates each song, screaming as if she is fighting her way out of your stereo. COLD MEAT has the rawness of Medway-style garage with the vocal intensity of, say, CRASS's "Darling" (times two). A completely flawless tape. (Greg) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, heltaskeltarecords.bandcamp.com)

COLLAGEN – COLLAGEN is from Victoria, BC, and they play menacing yet still fun hardcore. Like, their singer just sometimes shouts "whooo!!!" in the middle of a song and *it is not cheesy at all.* It's simple, direct, and like a lot of hardcore these days, is not afraid to put a butt-load of reverb on the vocals. It's the kind of shit that makes you wanna do a creepy-crawl through the basement. (Greg) (5-song cassette, no lyrics included, slow-death-records.bandcamp.com)

CRUTCH – CRUTCH sets the tone with the cover of their tape, which features a convicted pig with a noose around his neck. They start it off with a brooding, sludgy thing that reminds me of "The Bit" by the MELVINS, but quickly drop into an unstoppable onslaught of ferocious fastcore, powerviolence, and even hints of crossover-era DRI (but thankfully, that aspect is ever so fleeting). At times it feels like the more serious moments of SPAZZ, minus that dude with the funny voice (I know you know what I mean). Every song is packed with the intensity of a tornado knocking your fucking town off the map. A force to be reckoned with. (Greg) (11-song cassette, lyrics not included, crutchtheband.bandcamp.com)

CUNTROACHES – It's hard to make words about a thing that I like as much as this. Berlin's CUNTROACHES are taking noise punk to dizzying heights on this demo, but they are rooted in noise rock and experimental sounds instead of the blown-out hardcore that seems to lead so many bands down this hole. What if your local blown to shit *noise-not-music* outfit was fed a steady diet of SWELL MAPS, FRONT 242, the VSS, and SWANS, all before they were handed instruments for the first time? The over-the-top genre *du jour* employs noise added to the existing "music," whereas CUNTROACHES inject the chaos before the music even exists and *then* put the music on top. The shit is so far out there that it's hard to comprehend (much less describe), but rest assured that minds will be blown. Without question, this is the coolest thing I've heard all month. (Robert) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, cntroaches@gmail.com, cuntroaches.tumblr.com, cuntroaches.bandcamp.com)

DEAD WORDS – *Hey Rockers!* – '90s sounding melodic punk with '80s indie guitar hooks on lock. It's syrupy sweet, but they still got teeth…I mean "teeth" in the context of pop punk, you know? For ballpark references, please listen to GOMEZ or pre-major label GREEN DAY and then drink a lot (which means you'll eventually get to M.O.T.O.). (Robert) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, 700 Lynne Lane, Burleson, TX 76028, dwpoppunk@gmail.com)

DIGITAL LEATHER – *Whack Jam* – Moments of jerky primitive synth punk, plenty of blissed-out electronic indie, and a few bursts of straight-up dance music. All of the approaches are good (if not great), and I know there are punks reading this who love TRVST *and* JAY REATARD *and* SUICIDE... right? Fans of DIGITAL LEATHER will surely enjoy this as well, but do not expect what you're expecting, if you know what I mean. (Robert) (11-song cassette, lyrics not included, kindturkey.bandcamp.com)

DIORETIX – I suppose I could suggest that these SF kids narrow their focus a touch, because going from the blasting ferocity of "Stardust" to the almost melody of "The Total Perspective Vortex" and then full-on epic crust through a modern noisy HC filter on "Das Puppen" and then cranking out a pure powerviolence number like "Abolition" before fukkn *owning* guitar hooks on "Doomed To Repeat It" to wrap the thing up? Well…that might seem a little all over the place to some. But I won't suggest a fukkn thing, because all I *really* want is for DIORETIX to keep cranking out magic like this six-song creamer. Guitars scream and creak, threatening to break at any moment, and everything is fronted by some of the snottiest screams this side of Memphis. New band—I don't know anything about them except that this demo *rrrripppsss*. Excellent. (Robert) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, dioretix.bandcamp.com)

DOKUMENTIA – *Susi Söi* – Small-town, self-produced Finnish punk. While it definitely stinks of digital home-recording, the songs are good and straightforward with decent singalong choruses. Beware of the occasional wah-wah guitar solo, but otherwise this is solid, and if I lived in small-town Finland, DOKUMNETIA would probably be one of my favorite bands. Love the cover art, too: a cartoon drawing of a wolf wearing pants and wrapped in a snake, holding a big hammer, while all buildings in the background are on fire. (Matt) (16-song CD-R, lyrics not included, dokumentia.net)

DR IDENTITY – The first thing that stood out to me on this cassette is the simple, driving, pounding drumbeats…just floor tom and snare. Hardly any cymbals. It's a simple perfection that gives way to dark, down-stroked, sparse guitar and bass lines played in a way that sounds like what I would imagine 4AD would put out if they were a tape label in the '80s. The vocals are breathy and distant. Just like the drums that carry it, it's a simple perfection. I can imagine them opening for the CURE in 1981…but it ain't goth. (Greg) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, ripitupstartagain@gmail.com, dridentity.bandcamp.com)

EXIT DUST – A Gainesville band mining a guitar sound similar to PART 1; all knobs on the chorus pedal cranked high. The vocals are heavily reverbed and sound like they're in the other room. The whole thing is sort of awkward sounding, but I think it's a result of a weird mix. Just not very exciting, I'm afraid. (Matt) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, 10 N Main Street, Gainesville, FL 32601)

FACE DOWN IN SHIT – Fifteen-year-old tracks from an insanely good North Carolina stoner crust outfit. Crushing doom riffs delivered with basement DIY hardcore fury. Few bands have equaled the power of FACE DOWN IN SHIT before or since. For those who know: these tracks are from the demo, the COLD ELECTRIC FIRE split, and the *Concrete World* full-length. For the next generation: this *was* the sound of apocalyptic hardcore, pure, organic, and free of The Influence of Cool. File under: Essential. (Robert) (?-song cassette, $7 ppd, 3802 Lexington Drive, Raleigh, NC 27606)

FLESH EATING CREEPS – *The Book About the Movie: Complete Recordings 1995–2000* – Easily the best packaged tape I've ever gotten. It comes in an audiobook case with the cassette, two buttons, two stickers, eight-panel J-card, and a booklet detailing the history of the band. This tape includes every song that FLESH EATING CREEPS ever recorded, both studio and live. The track listing starts at the end with their final recordings in 2000 and works its way back to their first home practice recordings, so they're really showcasing the strength of the band and their evolution by ending where it all started. You can hear the band's evolution from East Coast DC hardcore to crossover thrash ending with D-beat, but so technical and rhythm challenging that they sound like jazz musicians who are flirting with hardcore rather than hardcore musicians attempting to push themselves up into jazz. From loose and dirty traditional hardcore up to sporadic powerviolence, this is the first that many of us are hearing of this group and they deserve to have their time capsule opened and shared. (Michael) (58-song cassette, lyrics included, flesheatingcreeps.bandcamp.com)

HOUSTON AND THE PROBLEMS – This shit is goofy as fuck. Jangly, space travel-themed cow-punk that bears more than a passing resemblance to a tighter version of

JON WAYNE's *Texas Funeral* LP. The guitar sounds like it was plugged straight into a four-track with no effects. The drums just might be a cardboard box. The southern accent on the singer just might be fake, but he also sounds like the singer of SEWER TROUT. Totally goofy, but really fun and engaging. (Greg) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, discontinuousinnovationinc.bandcamp.com)

HUMANITIES – The kind of band that hardcore dudes make when they grow up, but it sounds like HUMANITIES might have gotten here by way of heavy/alternative rock. Plenty of late '80s Dischord in the mix with a couple of compelling interludes to keep you guessing. (Robert) (6-song CD-R, lyrics not included, humanities.bandcamp.com)

IDLE VISION – The thing about the New Wave explosion of the mid twenty-teens (which I'm already all but over, by the way), is that people seem to be skipping all of the killer punk New Wave sounds of the '80s and going straight for second rate brooding goth, which is *really* hard to recreate without being a total bore. But what about cool, jerky, New Wave bands like B-52s, BILLY SYNTH (get those reissues, kiddos), DEVO, and the like? Exactly. But thankfully, not unlike Midwest heroes URANIUM CLUB, our friends from South Texas are keeping the shit driving, energetic, and punk. Keyboards, yes, but nothing overpowering; vocals brood a bit but are still forceful, kinda pop, kinda garage, kinda New Wave—"Soft Girl" is ready for a mall movie while "Killer" embodies everything that I feel like "dark punk" should be. This tape is a…killer. (Robert) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, idlevisionband@gmail.com, idlevision.bandcamp.com)

ICKO SICKO – *Dysphoric EP* – I like the occasional powerviolence band, but I can't say that I know much about it. This rager averages out to just over a minute a song (shortest song: five seconds. Longest song: two and a half minutes). This is the rage and frustration that punk is built upon. They are proudly from Chico and have strong ties with the Jefferson Crew. Members of CRIMINAL WAVE and OUTSIDE LOOKING IN. If you love your blastbeats and hate being let down by society and other punks, this might be the tape to get you up on your feet and out in the streets. (Alex) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, sickohc.bandcamp.com, Xerox Records, 781 1/2 E. 5th Street, Chico, CA 95928)

INVASIVE SPECIES – Very confident indie rock songwriting with dry D. Boon guitars, very creative and melodic drumming, busy bass that complements the two very well, and super charismatic vocals. Her voice is character-driven and creative, almost theatrical, with not just well written storied lyrics, but also so much personality. She grows from soft and breathy to a hysterical frustration, writhing and wailing. Very moving! This cassette is worth turning off the TV for. (Michael) (10-song cassette, lyrics included, theinvasivespecies.bandcamp.com)

JOHNSON FROM ACCOUNTING / MOLEDEBATER – *split* – JOHNSON FROM ACCOUNTING is a distinguishable but raw skatecore band. The first song is called "I Wanna Skate" and it's about skating, sooo…But it's all cleanly mixed and recorded hardcore that's easily understandable. MOLEDEBATER was a pop punk two-piece that has grown into a hardcore three-piece, but are still tight and melodic-thinking. It's nice and fun hardcore, especially coming from the clean poppy A-Side to the elevated and ramped B-Side. This split seems like a good interim for skate kids that are growing out of pop punk and coming into the fold of hardcore. (Michael) (10-song cassette, lyrics included, johnsonfromaccounting.bandcamp.com, moledebater.bandcamp.com)

KLAM – *The Concrete Vagina* – Italian dream pop, ethereal and airy. Heavy on light synths with CHRIS ISAAK meets ROBIN GUTHRIE guitars and a drum machine quietly putting in work in the background. Cassette has an EP of covers on the flip; DYLAN, RAMONES, VANDALS, RIDE all given the slow dark treatment, which is interesting. (Robert) (11-song cassette, lyrics not included, klam.bandcamp.com, landanimaltapes.bandcamp.com)

LONG GONE – *The Truth Beneath* – Meaty Finnish hardcore…they sound kinda hesitant and awkward at times, but it keeps the listener (in this case, me) from ever settling in. Vocals remind me of Dwid circa *Seasons*…and the music is cold and metallic. If Neanderthal bro-core were a little smarter, a little less bro, and a little more interesting…well, then the world might not need LONG GONE. Fortunately for us (and LONG GONE), Neanderthal bro-core is still pretty ignorant. (Robert) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, Aulangontie 40 C 30, 13220 Hämeenlinna FINLAND, longgonehc.bandcamp.com)

MACE – So sick. MACE is from Chicago and blasts out menacing, unrelenting, tight-as-fuck hardcore with breakdowns and "mosh parts" that feel like the world splitting in half. The lyrics are delivered with a breathless intensity that is refreshing, on point, and thankfully devoid of the current trend of "too much reverb." I can't recommend this highly enough. A perfect demo. (Greg) (9-song cassette, lyrics included, 7228 N. Rogers Avenue Rear, Chicago, IL 60645, macehc.bandcamp.com, bee.traverse@gmail.com)

OBJECTS – Hailing from Chicago, OBJECTS plays fuzz-filled, straightforward punk that has some garage leanings but definitely remains on the punk side of that fence. It's pretty awesome, but the vocals just sorta sound like a bunch of random thoughts scrawled down and read off of a sheet of paper. I guess it could be a cool style, but there's just not much emotion or feeling to it…like it could almost be transposed onto a twee-pop recording and fit nicely. (Greg) (5-song cassette, no lyrics included, 7228 N. Rogers Avenue Rear, Chicago, IL 60645, objex.bandcamp.com, bee.traverse@gmail.com)

PARANOID – *Cover of the Month* – Sweden's PARANOID set out to record a cover each month for the year 2015 and here is the result. Overall, these are D-beat mangel-flavored versions of your favorite death metal and classic US, UK, and Scandinavian hardcore punk songs. A nice surprise was the blastbeaten take on PENTAGRAM, a track that I was expecting to be played way more straightforward and traditional to the original. All songs are pre-millennium originals aside from PISSCHRIST and DARKTHRONE, but the curation creates an interesting listen. Totally international selection; other highlights include SEPULTURA, CELTIC FROST, and ACURSED, and it was cool to hear a STATE OF FEAR revitalization. I've only mentioned half the bands PARANOID have covered, so this is recommended if that got your attention. (Jason) (12-song cassette, lyrics not included, dbeatrawpunk@gmail.com)

PARTY FLAG – *You Can't Handle the Truth* – I would say this is kind of raunchy rock sounding with pop punk parts. It is definitely party music, sung pretty cleanly. (Mike) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, 2034 N. Dixie Highway, Wilton Manors, FL 33305)

PISSCAT – *Convenience and Chaos and Smashed and Rehashed* – This tape has its hardcore parts, its pop punk parts, and its ska parts. It has some serious lyrical parts, it has its goofy lyrical parts. It paints a pretty grim present/future and our relationship to technology and each other. (Mike) (11-song cassette, lyrics included, pisscat.bandcamp.com)

POISON RITES – Blown out rock'n'roll outta Denver that reminds me of NEW BOMB

TURKS or earlier TURBONEGRO. The raw sound benefits from the thick kick and snare that break through the barrier of noise just right. Not my favorite style, but cool tape nonetheless. (Matt) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, poisonrites.bandcamp.com)

POPULATION ZERO – *Fear Campaign* – Compared to previous POPULATION ZERO material I've heard, the work here is much more thrashed, with metal soloing over well-produced hardcore percussion and gruesome smut-choking vocals. I've always appreciated the mix of disgusting blackened crust and traditional squat-style hardcore POPULATION ZERO has to offer. For a band this menacing and chaotic in presentation, it's always good to find clear highs and lows in the mix, and that is what this tape has. Subtle guitar rings and I think I hear a woodblock and clear rack tom. All the while the vocals sizzle and the bass bellows onto that fire. A recognizable stench-punk sound from a Philly band that does not disappoint. (Jason) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, rifflifter@gmail.com)

PRYSS – *I Fear No Man* – From out there in the middle of the US (Springfield, IL, to be specific) comes PRYSS, who do not take any shit. Vicious, lurching, rage-inducing, feminist hardcore with lyrics about the futility of machismo, gender conformity, pain, and fear. The guitar sounds like it could knock a train off the tracks. These sounds are destructive and habit-forming. You have been warned. (Greg) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, ooeygooeytapes.bandcamp.com)

ROTTEN – *Punk Cult Fetish: Singles & Rarities* – This band sounds like literally any late '70s UK punk band. Snarling, overly accentuated faux Cockney vocals under the flag of GBH and the like. Flexing testosterone dressed up in their finest "piss-off" attitude, eighteen songs about sex and drugs and fightin' and spittin' and punkin'. It's cute and nostalgic, but then has a different flavor when you find out that this band formed only a few years ago and that all of these songs are from between 2011 and today. If this were a classic band that was going for it again, then yeah, cool, right on, but the fact that these kids are releasing the exact same blueprint formula almost forty years later is not as cute. Kind of makes it seem like punk rock Halloween costumes. Brand spanking new well-made punk rock time capsule, but when heard in a comp like this it's kind of too much of a throwback. (Michael) (18-song cassette, lyrics not included, jellymusicinc.bandcamp.com)

SCANNERS – DC-based cute boy alterna-pop band, very reminiscent of SUGAR, or at least the college rock songs of Warner-era HÜSKER DÜ. They sound like a pop band that has learned punk rock rather than a punk band that is embracing pop music, so their cred holds up. This is a cassette that the *Empire Records* employees would really like. (Michael) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, scannersdc.bandcamp.com, jaybizx@hotmail.com)

SHOWER BOYS – *The Second Dispatch* – Two-piece fast hardcore stripped down to nothing but the bare essentials….except that by stripping the low end, SHOWER BOYS have revealed that in some cases the bass is, in fact, essential. No teeth here, just comes off like a bunch of scratch tracks, demo versions of what are actually pretty good songs. (Robert) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, showerboys.bandcamp.com)

SNEEZE ATTACK – *Fever* – This band sounds most like the BREEDERS. It's kind of poppy and has that vocal style. The A-Side is a cover of EDDIE COOLEY and OTIS BLACKWELL's "Fever," made famous by PEGGY LEE, ELVIS, the MCCOYS, LA LUPE, BEYONCE, and of course MADONNA. The B-Side is one original and a cover of CUB's "One Last Kiss." (Mike) (3-song cassette, lyrics not included, sneezeattack.bandcamp.com)

STUCKO – *I Need A Brain Massage* – This is gonna sound mean, but there is nothing that really sets this apart from other punk bands to me besides that it is *fun.* It's jangly, fast punk with semi-high pitched vocals and a good sense of melody, but none of it sticks in my head. None of it makes me wanna get up out of my chair and shove my head through a wall. It's got a little bit of that Secret Center Records / Sacramento-in-the-'90s style vibe, but not nearly as catchy. Still…it's fun. (Greg) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, discontinuousinnovationinc.bandcamp.com)

STUCKO – This is the second tape I'm reviewing by this band and I like it a lot more than the other one. I'm not sure what it is. Everything on here is more aggressive and urgent…more fucked up sounding. It's simply driving, desperate sounding punk that shares some of the bluntness of CHANNEL 3. It's a lot catchier than their other tape. Cool acoustic BEACH BOYS cover song, too. (Greg) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, discontinuousinnovationinc.bandcamp.com)

SUPERNATURAL PSYCHO – This is a two-song cassingle. The first track, "Hard Time," is pretty poppy and quite catchy, featuring soaring leads and high and low voices that are very clear. It's pretty mid-tempo. Side-B is called "Daze Go Bye" and is much more driving and droney, becoming pretty much a chant. The lower voice is mixed up front on this side. (Mike) (2-song cassette, lyrics not included, supernaturalpsycho.bandcamp.com)

TORTURE GARDEN – *Hecatombs* – Bombastic and to the point low end hardcore from New Orleans. This four-song creamer is proof that if you do it hard and you do it right, then you don't need to reinvent the wheel. Lead vocals are pure devastation, and while you could argue that the riffs are simple…I would counter that TORTURE GARDEN just gives everything room to develop and breathe. Clench your fist and bang it hard, this is top-notch epic D-Beat, absolutely massive. (Robert) (4-song cassette, no lyrics, 4921 Freret Street, New Orleans, LA 70115, torturegarden504.bandcamp.com)

TOYOTA – I was asked to not compare this band to the CONEHEADS, but their first song is pure CONEHEADS worship, which is just sped up DEVO worship. As the tape progresses the band delves more into discordance, experimentation, and angular rhythms, setting them apart from that first blanket comparison…so it's kinda like the CONEHEADS if they listened to more RESIDENTS and MINUTEMEN. It's good and tight, but it just makes me wanna listen to my Northwest Indiana tapes (because they're better). Five songs in ten minutes. (Greg) (5-song cassette, no lyrics included, discontinuousinnovationinc.bandcamp.com)

2014 – *Caterva Actio Iterum* – This was recorded in December of 2014, and their Bandcamp says that their band name is 2015, so is the band now called 2016? It's folk punk in that sometimes they're playing garage poppy punk electrically, but the majority of the tape is cute acoustic folk songs with that positive jackass pop punk ethos. It'd be cool to play these songs with your friends around a campfire. (Michael) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, 2015.bandcamp.com)

TRASH NIGHT – Hailing from Bloomington, IN, TRASH NIGHT brings us flailing and desperate garage-fueled punk with angry lyrics about wanting to burn shit down, leaving town on a train (unfortunately the rails in B'ton have been decommissioned), eating out of the trash, and shitty fuckin' cops. Nothing fancy at all. Just straightforward, snotty, and punk as fuck in all the ways that no one ever expects from that town but is more prevalent than you think. (Hey TRASH NIGHT: I've played a lot of music in your basement and have slept on your roof). (Greg) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, 804 S Rogers St, Bloomington, IN 47403)

ULTRA GASH – *Demo 2015* – Trashy and desperate rock'n'roll from Alberta. These songs have a nasty/slimy/oozy feel similar to LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS and their crew, except this is (basement) rock'n'roll. Reminds me of the good times I had seeing MURDER CITY DEVILS in the late '90s. I dunno if it's just cause everybody's been talking about IGGY POP because he just played, but I think Iggy would enjoy this journey into the seedy, rash covered underbelly of Canadian wildassness. (Alex) (11-song cassette, lyrics not included, trenchrash.bandcamp.com)

LA VASE – *Submersion Demo 2015* – Nice melodic and bouncy punk from Leipzig, but sung in French. The rhythm section is tight and punchy, and the shouted vocals are used more for rhythm than melody. The guitars play textural stuff here and there (ring-outs, noisy open chords) while the rest of the band holds it down. Really solid playing and writing and presented with a very effective recording. Great tape. (Matt) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, la-vase@gmx.de)

V.E.X. – *Codex Hex* – Lulu and Roxy, who have been playing together for years in Bay Area bands like FLOATING CORPSES and MOIRA SCAR, are the two primary members of V.E.X. They play dense, harsh, industrial noise with some soaring vocals and cabaret overtones. Sometimes they have some minimal synth moments that bring the SCREAMERS to mind, but I find myself thinking of early RESIDENTS a little more, but V.E.X. are a beast all their own. The distorted cassette four-track recording gives it a dirty sounding vibe that is murky and inviting. You know how you sometimes show up late to the party and everyone is already on all of the drugs and you'll never be able to catch up? That's how this feels. It's cool. (Greg) (12-song cassette, lyrics not included, coolworldpartyla.tumblr.com, scar.press@gmail.com)

VICIOUS DREAMS – Orlando butt-rock bar band. Beer and hot wings kind of music. Songs like "The Mess We're In" are about standard relationship nothings that really hit the spot when you're out with the gang and you don't want to go home because your spouse is mad at you for spending so much time at the bar. Very lo-fi production, which makes for an almost live sounding atmosphere with dry roomy sounding drums, vocals that are often too hot, and plenty of guitar fuck ups. Give it a shot if you are sleeping on the couch because your partner is mad at you. (Michael) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, viciousdreams.bandcamp.com

VIOLENCE – I've been looking forward to checking the sounds from this Oakland outfit for a while now, and I was not disappointed. No guitar, two basses, and a distinct lack of traditional riffing, these tracks are awkward slogs more than full force fist bangers, but punk is awkward, no? The moment you get infected by The Pogo (which you surely will, assuming you have a pulse, on the eponymous opener), you'll be slapped by jerky rhythms from "Punk Justice" and "We Want Anarchy," defiantly punk tracks defying convention is every way possible. I feel uncomfortable after listening to this, and increased volume only made it worse. Highly recommended. (Robert) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, PO Box 84, Oakland, CA 94604, violenceoakland@gmail.com)

WOLF LUV – *Fighting My Future* – A guy in a wolf mask and leather jacket fronting a hardcore band kinda reminds me of a certain rock'n'roll bunny with a leather jacket, but this is a different beast altogether. WOLF LUV plays wild-ass, borderline inept hardcore with a grunting and whining wolf singer who sounds like Todd from the first few FYP singles. For a more recent comparison, you could say it's in the realm of the current crop of mutated Midwestern sounds…but a small step above the muck and dreck. Good shit! (Greg) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, ooeygooeytapes.bandcamp.com)

WRECKED LEXUS – *Produced By Joan Jett* – The cover is that photo of JOAN JETT jumping on that one album (I think it's actually called *Album*). Funny and cute tongue-in-cheek pop punk from Pittsburgh that's everything you'd hope a pop punk band would be, down to the joke title. The good news is that it's at least faster. Not lame ballad BLINK-182, but more like amped SCREECHING WEASEL. Seems like more and more guilty-pleasure pop punkers are showing themselves. (Michael) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, wreckedlexus.bandcamp.com)

X45 – Classic and fiery sounding punk shits, something you'd want to hear from an unearthed 1979 Thunders burner, and something you rarely get in the Twenty-Teens. Plenty of rock'n'roll (OK, maybe I don't need the dive bomb during the "Gods On Earth" solo, but I appreciate the gusto nonetheless), and this creamer is loose as a goose, presumably due to excessive consumption. Maxed out and mid-tempo. Sold. (Robert) (3-song cassette, lyrics not included, ex.forty.five@gmail.com, exfortyfive.bandcamp.com)

THE YUUZHAN VONG – *Reflected Through Cataracts* – Total '90s college/grunge rock revisited. The NIRVANA influence is blatant and unavoidable, and honestly things don't really move much further than that. Wisconsin trio who are very good at doing the thing they are trying to do, and fans of the resurgence of this brand of alt rock will be very pleased. (Robert) (9-song CD-R, no lyrics, theyuuzhanvongrocks@gmail.com)

ŻONA ZLA – *Sesja 1* – Irish punks singing in Polish, I think. UK82 riffs with some influence from the '80s Polish hardcore punk scene. Lyrics about being poor, depressed, and hating all the things that punks hate. This seems to be a punker side project from BLOW INS (see review a few issues back). (Alex) (9-song cassette, lyrics included, zonazladublinpunk.bandcamp.com, jose3@wp.pl)

V/A – *Heavy On th' Gunk 1* – This is a tape comp of garbage rock / noise groups spanning the US east coast from Florida all the way up to New England. Most of the bands use super lo-fi / fucked recording methods…like straight to boombox or glitched-out broken shit. KANG BUCKET sounds like a budget version of that old Nintendo game, F-Zero. FAT YOUTH plays noisy-ass hardcore. HUMAN ADULT BAND blasts out a circulating, grunge-style riff while some maniac howls over it. It's a true assault on the eardrums (in a good way) from the lowest of lo-fi noise. It also includes TRANSIT MOTHER, HALVES AND THIRDS, RUSSIAN MAGNETS, and LOCAL TEEN. Top-quality bullshit. (Greg) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, dihd.net, dihdrecords@gmail.com)

V/A – *Stranded In Cleveland, Ohio: A Mix Tape For* Distort *By Blow Blood Records* – A varied and excellent mix with Cleveland bands on one side and a sampling from the roster of Australian tape label Blow Blood Records on the flip. Noisy and raucous hardcore, garage punk, and a touch of goth are all included. EEL, CAUCASOID, WET BRAIN, VANILLA POPPERS, QUITTER, SHORT ORDER, GROTTO, DIPSHIT, and a really bad cover from BAD NOIDS are the highlights…top quality throughout. (Robert) (21-song cassette, lyrics not included, blowbloodrecords.bandcamp.com)

ZINES

Send zines for review to:
Maximum Rocknroll
PO Box 460760
San Francisco, CA 94146

Reviewers:
(BW) Brendan Wells
(CD) Conor Duncan
(DG) Dan Goetz
(DZ) Ryan Modee
(EC) E. Conner
(EW) Eli Wald
(JB) Julia Booz
(KS) Kenn Suto
(MB) Mariam Bastani
(OG) Oscar Gutierez
(RB) Rory Britt

BENEFICIO INTERNO #17

42 pgs

This is a Spanish language punk fanzine from Costa Rica that features interviews with primarily Spanish speaking bands from all over accompanied with a mix CD of the bands interviewed! There are a few short columns and a few interviews with bands not featured on the mix, but largely this is a fanzine taken to the highest level with its roots firmly planted in a blog that has reviews and a radio show of the same name. The content online and in the physical zine are different, so checking out both is totally worth it. The interviews are short (good for novice Spanish speakers) with much of the standard fare, but each interview is very catered to each band with moments of reflection on larger issues. The interviewer knows and follows these bands. The sounds run the range of post-punk, street punk, metal veering hardcore, Oi!, etc.—there is so much here. Most of the bands featured are from Costa Rica, an area of the world that punk often sadly ignores, but there are also bands from Panama, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Spain, and France. There is so much content packed into these pages with simple, inviting black and white layout. The whole thing is aesthetically pleasing, but the focus here is the content. The stand out here is definitely solid, D-beat Juventud Podrida from Panama and gothy, nervous, post-punk Desorden Siniestro from Costa Rica. Other notables are Sexo Y Sangre, more post-punk from Costa Rica, OG '00s street punk band Ratas Citadinas, and Melómana Distorsió, a grindy, dissonant, experimental band. I highly encourage dropping into the radio show to hear some of what you are missing. (MB)

beneficiointerno@gmail.com / beneficiointerno.blogspot.com

CASTING COUCH #4

$5 / 36 pgs

Out of Austin, TX, comes this garage rock / punk fanzine featuring interviews with Crazy Spirit, La Misma, Richard Papiercuts, Golden Pelicans, and Lavender Flu, plus a comic and a lot of reviews. The interview with La Misma was the highlight for me, and it also featured some of the best design in this issue. I wish that the cut and paste style would feature into the rest of the zine, 'cos it looks really sharp and it's fun to read. The centerfold pullout photo was compositionally strong but seemed somewhat out of place and it would have been cool to have some context behind the image. Besides that, the stuff that's here is good, and I think that this zine could do some really dope stuff by branching out with other kinds of content besides reviews and interviews. (CD)

castingcouchzine@gmail.com / castingcouchzine.storenvy.com

DWELLING PORTABLY: APRIL 2016

$2 / 18 pgs

You get a lot of content for two dollars with *Dwelling Portably*—every page is essentially uninterrupted typewriter text from top to bottom. This, symbols, and shorthand abbreviations had me feeling sometimes like I was reading a homemade technical manual, and that's kind of the fun novelty of this thing, but it also has a lot of practical and accessible info. We get a discussion of styles for sleeping in hammocks and a handful of book reviews that range from living in small spaces to wilderness survival guides to a book about extreme sea waves and one about different boat sail materials. The author relays a lot of interesting facts on wilderness survival and sailing that I probably wouldn't have pursued on my own. I was entertained, but a several page exposé on what kind of boat the author plans to design is so full of numbers and symbols that it's like reading HTML and it is really only going to be accessible for diehard DIY sailors. Overall a very unique item for those interested in wingnut self-publishing or doing the outdoors DIY. I'm going to order a few back issues just for fun. (BW)

PO Box 181, Alsea, OR 97324

EVERYTHING IS FINE #1

$3.50 US, $5 intl. / 36 pgs

The aesthetic of this perzine is much like a teenage scrapbook: half cut and paste with parts handwritten, other parts put together with a typewriter, scribblings of isolation and disconnection. The artwork alternates between beauty and darkness, almost a metaphor for the zine's theme entirely, the conflict between society's standards of self-imagery versus your own neurosis. Body image, eating disorders, feminism, and self-advocacy are huge themes here. My favorite part was that it came with a found button (not the punk kind, but the kind from a shirt!), a reference to a very intimate story the writer tells in the issue. Everything about this zine feels very vulnerable, candid, raw, and honest, much like reading someone's diary. (RB)

PO Box 8724, Salem, MA 01971 / etsy.com/shop/zinesbynyxia

GENERAL ADMISSION MUTT #2

$2 / 22 pgs

It's always weird when you feel like you're supposed to laugh—you want to laugh!—but it's just not funny. It's not fucked up or offensive or boring dad level jokes, but it's just not funny. *General Mutt #2* left me with that feeling. With it's "emails" from David Grohl about "post-industrial electrolyte krautrock," little Greg Ginn chime-ins on each page, and sharpie made advertisements, I felt like I wanted to chuckle at some joke but I just didn't find anything worth it. Sure, the film review about "CBCB" has some good moments (best piece in this thing), but the bizarre swipe at Death Row records (via another sharpie ad mocking them) and inclusion of a call made to *Car Talk* just left me thinking…well, nothing. It felt like someone slapped something together, something that lacked the art and ardor of a cheaply made zine full of intention and also fell short of the more produced look they might have been shooting for (heavy sharpie use in the later pages—and don't get me wrong, I love a sharpie, too). The music reviews on Night Birds, Pleasure Leftists, and Beach Slang might be worth picking up for fans of those bands. I think we can all take some time to enjoy pot shots at Greg Ginn, so I'll give props for that part of it. It's all going for something, so maybe #3 will feel more worth it. (KS)

PO Box 9, New York, NY 10034 / generaladmissionmutt@gmail.com

HARDCORE ARCHITECTURE: GRACE AMBROSE

$5 / 22 pgs

If you've ever wondered how the back end of this fine rag operates, or what the childhood of our favorite coordinator and her entry into the dark world of DIY punk looked like, go no further. Marc Fischer, if you're not familiar, is doing God's work, cataloging every weird thing you've never wanted to know about with his online project Public Collectors. Public Collectors' splinter projects include the epic *Hardcore Architecture*. Using a combination of old issues of *Maximum* and Google street view, he recontextualizes the homes of hardcore bands from the '80s. This paper mag is a departure, focusing on a single subject. Our lady of the bummers Grace Ambrose is interviewed in detail about the inner workings of *MRR* and the future of punk to come. It's limited, duh. Get one. (EC)

halfletterpress.com

NOT SHIT #3

56 pgs

I love big fucking zines. People are too economical. It's not like you're actually paying for fucking copies, you fuck, so make that shit big as fuck. Make sure all the squares commuting on the fucking train can see the big ass illustration of some spiky punk babe getting oral sex from some other spiky punk babe. There is room to breath on these pages and to take in all the sights. Brief interviews with skaters from all over as well as Animal Mother and tips and tricks for you and your board. Pictures and illustrations dot almost every page if they aren't actually fully featured. Frankly, this shit is inspirational. (EC)

notshitmagazine@gmail.com

PASAŻER #32

22 zl / 208 pgs

This thick and slick hardcore punk magazine is all in Polish (a language I do not read) but you don't need a translation to see the adoration of punk and hardcore in this well-produced, picture-filled publication. There are some columns, a bunch of record reviews, and a whole onslaught of interviews, many featuring artists I didn't need a translation to know—Cockney Rejects, the Exploited, Poison Idea, and Lars Frederiksen. Toss in a historical piece on Black Flag and one about Thrillhouse Records in San Francisco and there's something for most hardcore punk fans. Frankly, since a lot is lost in not knowing what is written on the pages, I got one sort of rather aggro impression from looking through the magazine's pictures (big sweaty shaved head dudes with skinhead shirts came up few times). I listened to the accompanying CD and I realized my initial impression was wrong—There's a wide range of punk showing up here (the CD featured more than one band with horns and some more tender stuff). Made me think a little of a Polish *Razorcake*. Pick it up if you read Polish and love hardcore. (KS)

PO Box 42, 39-201 Debica 3, POLAND / pasazer@pasazer.pl

POSITIVE CREED #28

£5 / 22 pgs

Positive Creed #28 is a fanzine in the traditional punk sense. The creators, Rob and Steve, deliver a solid read that packs in material and reminds us why paper and ink zines get so many of us foaming about punk stuff. The layout is simple: the whole thing is stapled together with no binding and it's all black and white, with lots of text, well-reproduced photos, a solidly engaging cover, and—on the back a street punk poem cut and pasted over a picture of a mushroom cloud (I'll admit, I'm a sucker for that kind of thing). There are lots of record and fanzine reviews and a couple of columns, but most of the zine is made up of interviews. The interview with the current drummer of Against Me! is a throwaway bit (due to the very short answers to all the questions), but I enjoyed reading the talks with Boff Whalley from Chumbawamba, Rick Buckler of the Jam, and Steve Drewett from Newton Neurotics (who delivers the memorable quote "politics is life and life is what is reflected in music"). Yes, this is mostly older punk stuff, so if that's not your jam you can probably pass, but if you like UK punk of yesterday (and today) and if you enjoy a fanzine that folks clearly put a lot of work into, then check this out. I especially liked "The Importance of D.I.Y. Publishing," a piece made up of contributions from a few writers of long time UK punk zines talking about—obviously—the importance of DIY zines. It's a lot of things you might be able to guess but also made good arguments for the paper and ink zine as a real window for self-expression and tool for capturing our personal and communal histories in the disposable digital age. I think any article that leaves me writing down quotes is one I'd recommend reading, and this one is from Neil Duncan, writer of *Issue*, who reminds us that zines "all contribute a slightly different perspective on things, and whilst you may not agree with everything you see written in every zine you read, there is still a respect for the individual (or team) who has taken the time, put in the effort, and spent money to have their voice heard." It seems obvious, but it's always good to be reminded. (KS)

PO box 777, EX1 9TH UNITED KINGDOM / positivecreed@gmail.com

PUNK ROCK GLEE CLUB #1

$2 / 44 pgs

Chicago's Blue Ribbon Glee Club is an a cappella group that performs covers of classic punk rock songs from Joan Jett to Gang of Four. This zine, compiled by Liz Mason, contains stories and interviews with members of the group, discussing their own origin stories and memories. It feels a lot more like a program or a yearbook than a fanzine, but the writer's enthusiasm is very clear. The Blue Ribbon Glee Club seems like a fun group to take part in—no members are professional musicians and everyone is truly doing this as a labor of love, much like a punk band. The layout of the zine is pretty simple and includes photos of each member interviewed. (RB)

quimbys.com

RAZORCAKE #91

$4 / 112 pgs

Another issue of this long-running fanzine and it is exactly what you would expect. *Razorcake* has always been a hard sell for me because I'm generally not that interested in their content. I am not much of a pop punk kid but occasionally the articles will peak my interest. It's possible that I am too neurotic for *Razorcake,* which always seemed really posi to me—I like to walk away a bit more disturbed and challenged from a fanzine. This issue was kind of lukewarm. It features decent in-depth interviews with Long Island's Iron Chic, Midwesterners All Dogs, and Southern California's the Bomb Pops. (RB)

PO Box 42129, Los Angeles, CA 90042

RICEBALL #1

$2 / 28 pgs

Riceball is about understanding and recognizing brown identity in the face of punk exclusiveness. It's about sexual trauma and abuse, mental illness and surviving in a fucked, racist culture. It's about an ex-academic's reclamation of communication. And it's about decolonizing love and queerness. Throughout this writing I noticed that Elena is really about calling out bullshit but also about wanting to be vulnerable and practice self-love. It's an affirming rant, a look into the experiences of being a scholar but feeling locked out, wanting to have their writing in an accessible format instead of the ivory towers, as they put it. All cut and paste over old pictures of botanical prints and entomological study charts, I stumbled through the internet speak (I had to look up what AF means) (and then felt stupid because it is so obv) but liked the personal articulation and the vibe that we support each other. There is also a powerful and scholarly piece on healing, feminism, and de-silencing abuse stories while dismantling victimhood. I'm looking up other writing by this fierce Pinay punk princess. (JB)

elena.arntz@gmail.com / upsettingg.tumblr.com

SACRED FEMININE

$10 / 38 pgs

There is a part of me as a queer person of color that constantly asks how my presence impacts, transforms, and challenges space. *Sacred Feminine* may not fully answer the question, but it definitely gives a look into the conversation that is continuously happening within this question. This zine is edited by Edgar Frias and Claire Barrera and it has ten contributors all discussing the ways in which things like spirituality and existence of queer and trans folk can exist as a contestation to established beliefs of masculinity, femininity, and established methods of understanding our energies through a binary that gives queer and trans people a way of understanding our multiplicities in spaces that do not recognize them. More significant to me is the presentation of this information, which strips away from the institution of academic texts and writing and into an accessible and personal presentation of defining and (re) membering ourselves. I'm convinced that this is the way we need to move forward with these conversations. *Sacred Feminine* is a zine that is actively pushing toward an understanding of self through spirituality and existence. Highly recommend this collection. (OG)

seeingyouseeingmeseeingyou@gmail.com

$PARE ¢HANGE #34: NOTES FROM ANARCHTICA

$2 / 36 pgs

Tom's long running regional fanzine keeps churning out earnest musings and hopeful notes from life on the brink in Chattanooga, Tennessee. This issue is simple in premise but rich in content. It's a collection of notes left on the wall of the punk house he's lived at for over fourteen years. I count myself lucky to have played a show or two in this holy place. To set the scene: imagine a chubby shirtless twenty-three-year-old wearing shorts that expose about half of a butt offering you a "gift" of a strawberry margarita while about for or five dogs run around and the place slowly fills up with punks of all ages getting off work and tying one on and raging in the basement, everyone singing along to every song the local band plays until the wee hours. It's mythic for a real reason. The couch is actually really comfortable. (EC)

PO Box 6023, Chattanooga, TN 37401

STITCHES IN MY HEAD #9

$4 CAD, $9 CAD with tape, plus postage / 26 pgs

This punk shit is *exhausting*. I rarely party or go on tour, I don't enter the pit more than like twice a year, but still at the end of the week the punkest thing I wanna do is collapse in bed and watch videos of shows I didn't go to with the sound off. Luckily we have zines like *Stitches in My Head* living on and documenting the true fringe. Editor Christina Pap has spent the last year living in Australia and Cleveland, OH and accumulating content for issue #9. I have never lived in or visited either of these places, but they both seem deeply fucked up to me—this zine absolutely verifies my biases. This issue starts off with an interview with Perverts Again, Cleveland's purveyors of a unique form of exhaustion and endurance music. The interview touches on a lot of the usual subjects: how did the band get together; how did you end up on your esteemed label; what are you going after, lyrically; etc. It's a line of questioning that can lead to less interesting conversations when the subject or their work isn't as compelling (see: Digital Octopus, also interviewed in this issue) but right now we're talking about a truly weird sounding band, we're talking about Cleveland: it's good reading. There are also two tour diaries, one with Royal Headache in the US (also serialized in *MRR* #392–393) and a journal taken on the first leg of Scab Eater's overland odyssey across Australia. I guess they actually drove cross-country on the Scab Eater tour, through the outback, camping in fields of dry clay, and passing exotic roadkill in a convoy of a small-ish Australian sedan and at least one motorcycle. The tone of the diary is pretty bleary-eyed and bewildered, framing some episodes enough to get you curious but then leaving out; it leaves space for the imagination to run wild if you care to do so. What's inside of the *Mad Max 2* museum, and is there a museum for any other films in the series? What's the deal with the commune they played at in Nimbin? What kind of constellations can you see at night in the outback? A lot of details are lost in a haze of alcohol and MD tabs. There's a full page spread about Maggotfest VI, which absolutely none of the attendees could remember. Other features include interviews with Ukranian label Voice From Inside, Chicago group Muff Divers, ShequalizingXDistort and Cruel Noise radio, and more. I like the layout a lot: I think the lettering gets infinitesimally smaller in each line of text in a paragraph, which has a way of drawing in and maybe even crossing the eye. Track it down. It should still be available from the source, plus the zine is redeemable for one mixtape crafted by the editor. (EW)

36 Brunswick Ave, Apt #5, Toronto, ON MSS 2L7, CANADA / stitchesinmyheadfanzine@gmail.com

SUBURBAN BLIGHT #12

$2 (free to prisoners) / 53 pgs

Suburban Blight #12 is a pretty straight up political zine, with a focus towards social justice and radical socialism. After a table of contents (I love a table of contents in a zine, it sounds silly but I really do) it opens with a commentary piece about the difference between radicals and liberals, then moves into updates about movements in NYC (NYC Shut It Down, People's Power Assemblies, and folks protesting that monster Roosh V and his Return of Kings group) and after that teachers organizing around the country. There's also a piece about Italian-Americans coming out against Columbus Day, an art section, and some interesting book reviews, including ones on Jamal Joesph's autobiography *Panther Baby* and Staughton Lynd's *Solidarity Unionism*. The layout is simple, with handwritten titles over blocks of text and grainy photos, and the writing is full of vigor if not grace, but *Suburban Blight #12* packs in a lot of information and ardor, which seems to be the point. (KS)

370 Seventh Ave, Suite 1401, New York, NY 10001 / callthedoctor_@hotmail.com

SUCKER! #1

$2 / 36 pgs

Chaotic, emotive journaling about breaking up with their fiancé, this is the story of traveling West to start over and trying to find meaning in an empty life. It's sad but it also doesn't go into the gritty details that make stuff like this compelling. It's like they published the vague storyline in order to make sure to remember what was happening. It's linear, but feels like so many parts are left out, and I kept feeling like I was reading someone's outline of what happened in a year. I don't mean to sound like I didn't like it, because it is interesting in the way anyone's personal stories can be. There is a lot about grief, from a best friend passing in addition to the deep heartbreak of being broken up with by the person you thought you'd spend your life with. It's about building a new identity while still honoring what came before. The parts about their dad dying are especially sad, since it's the last tie to an old life. There's a color picture (seemingly of the author with a sexy lollipop) on the cover and the inside back cover, again of the author ostensibly embracing a new friend looking out over the Pacific. I'm glad they are healing and having new experiences to give space between the now and the then. (JB)

burnblackzine@gmail.com / burnblackzine.bigcartel.com

THE TROUBLE WITH NORMAL #138

$2 / 40 pgs

Super long running Columbia, MO zine that I assume is pretty essential for the local house show attendee. Local show reviews take up the most ink and there are a few bits of music reviews and a couple of rants. I have a few long running problems with this zine: Not huge deal breakers, but a few tiny ones. The interviews and articles are usually pretty old. My first time reviewing this zine had me reading ideas typed nearly a year prior. Also, I think it needs some new blood. The main guy pretty much has the exact same thing to say about every single record *and* show review—that he had been curious about this band for a while, had been unable to check them out, enjoyed their aggressive energy, and wonders what the future holds in store for them. I did learn about a few cool area musicians, though, so I guess I'm just an asshole. (DZ)

PO Box 1844, Columbia, MO 65205 / ttwn@hotmail.com

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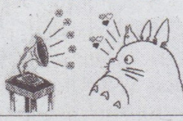

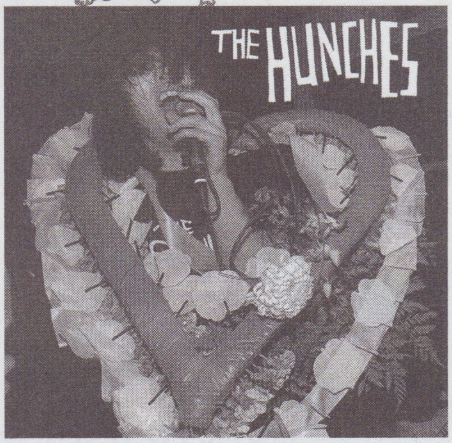

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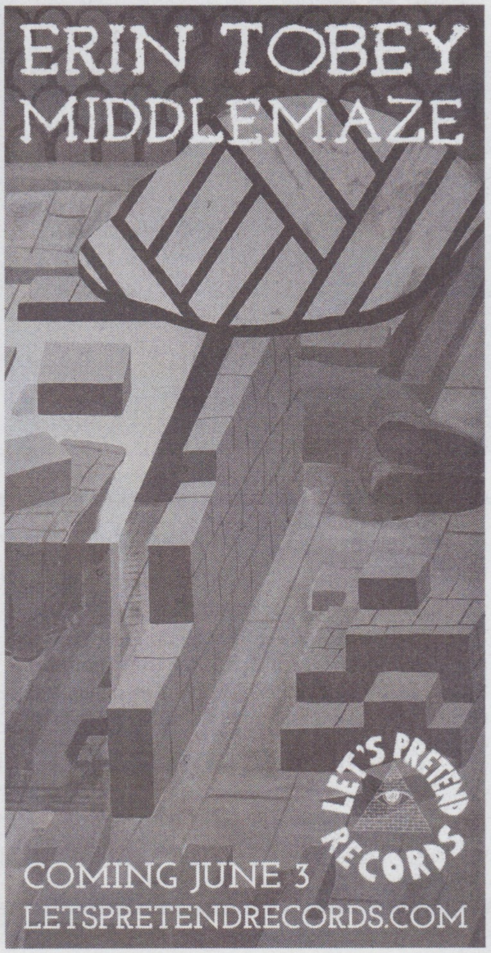

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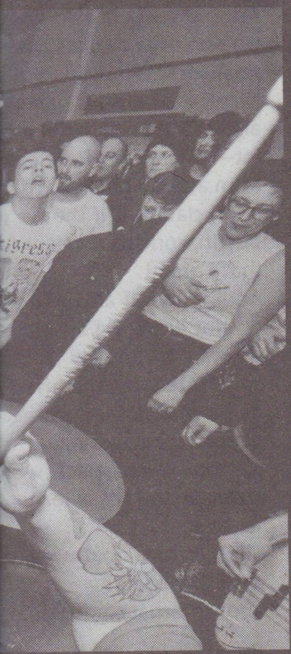
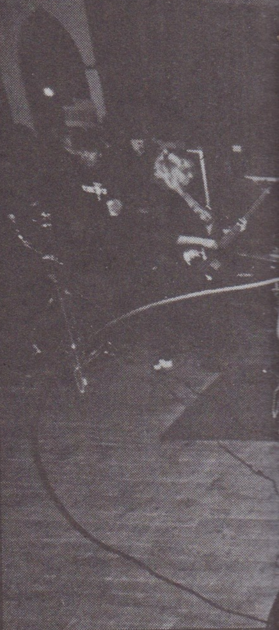
ISSUE #401: THE ART ISSUE. PROFILES, INTERVIEWS, AND ARTWORK FROM SOME OF THE BEST VISUAL ARTISTS IN THE WORLDWIDE DIY SCENE.



COLONIA



SIN ORDEN'S LAST SHOW

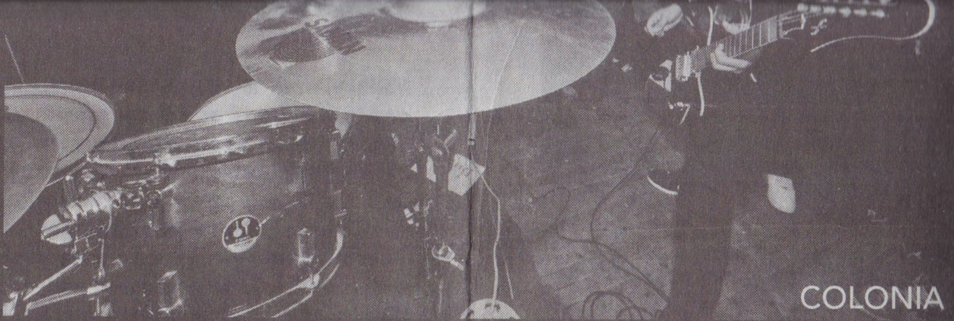
En 2000, Lengua Armada, la discografía de
Brutalidad Juvenil. En ese momento, no eran
primera banda. Dieciséis años después, Sorr
legítimamente considerados uno de los grand
Viva Sin Orden. Gracias por todo.

In 2000, Martin Sorrondeguy's record label
Juvenil. At the time, they were just a group
Sixteen years later, Sorrondeguy photograph
as one of the modern American hardcore g
everything.

SIN ORDEN

PHOTOS BY MARTIN SORRONDEGUY

SIN ORDEN



COLONIA

SIN ORDEN'S LAST SHOW

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SIN ORDEN

PHOTOS BY MAR